

# THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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## CONTENTS

NOTES OF THE WEEK ... 557

### LEADING ARTICLES:

The Budget ... 560  
The Cosmic Breath ... 561  
Premier and Idealist ... 562

### MIDDLE ARTICLES:

The Comedy of Westminster ... 563  
Apology for Punters. By Gerald Gould ... 564  
On Not Hearing Whiteman's Band. By J. B. Priestley ... 566

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ. CCI:

Organized Capital and Labour Shocked at the Demand for Responsibility. By 'Quiz' ... 565

### ART:

"Here a Little and There a Little." By Anthony Bertram ... 567

### THE THEATRE:

Sweetness and Blight. By Ivor Brown ... 568

LITERARY COMPETITIONS ... 569

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ... 570

A NUMBER OF THINGS ... 572

NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE ... 573

### REVIEWS:

Mr. Lawrence's Philosophy. By Edward Shanks ... 573  
The Life of William Godwin ... 574  
The English Inn ... 574

### REVIEWS—continued

The Fugger News-Letters ... 575  
How to Distinguish Prints ... 576  
The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought ... 576

### NEW FICTION: By L. P. Hartley

Verity Thurston ... 576  
Payment Deferred ... 576  
The Best American Short Stories of 1925 ... 577

### SHORTER NOTICES ... 578

MOTORING. By H. Thornton Rutter ... 578

ACROSTICS ... 580

THE QUARTERLIES ... 582

CITY NOTES ... 584

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

BY the time these words are read the period of the coal subsidy will have expired. Peace in the mining industry will either have been achieved or be well on the way to achievement, or else we shall be faced with a disastrous stoppage. It is a disheartening but not necessarily a fatal fact that, as we write, there is still no progress to report. Meetings between the Prime Minister, the miners and the owners have been frequent throughout the week, but the temper on both sides seems to have been as hard and uncompromising as ever. Mr. Baldwin, with his knowledge of business, his sense of fairness and his conciliatory personality, is the very man to bring two disputants into harmony; that he has so far failed (when this is in print he may have succeeded) is proof of the intractable material with which he has had to work.

### THE PUBLIC PAYS

Partly, no doubt, the stubbornness of both sides is due to tactical considerations. They calculate that by prolonging the uncertainty to the last minute of the eleventh hour they may get more out of the Government—which means, of course,

out of the public. They hope that sooner than face the catastrophe of a stoppage the Government will once more step into the breach, as it did last August, and will enlarge its views of that "temporary assistance" which it has conditionally promised. The Premier is said to be desirous of reaching an agreement which will guarantee peace in the coalfields for a considerable period of years. That may come, but time is now so short that if such a settlement is somehow to be reached, some day-to-day agreement for postponement of the notices must be reached while the details of permanent peace are being discussed. If owners or miners are bluffing till the last moment in order to see what they can get, they are guilty of criminal contempt for the well-being of the country.

### THE BUDGET

Mr. Churchill on Monday expounded his Budget in as lucid a speech as this generation has heard from any Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the existing basis of taxation he estimated, somewhat surprisingly, that 1926-27 would show a deficit of £7,900,000. This deficit he proposed to turn into a surplus of over £14,000,000 by transferring £7,000,000 from the Road Fund and annexing a fixed proportion of its future income to the Treasury; by a tax on such betting, that is to say credit betting and betting on race-courses, as is admittedly legal;

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by new taxes on imported wrapping-paper, the heavier kind of motor vehicles, and on some of the articles already within the scope of the McKenna duties; and by reducing the credit period allowed to brewers for the payment of excise duty. Having thus found his £14,000,000 surplus, he announced that he would devote £10,000,000 of it to raising the contribution to the Sinking Fund up to £60,000,000 for the year, and would hold the remaining £4,000,000 in hand.

#### SOUND FINANCE

These proposals have had, as they deserve to have, a good reception both in the House and in the country. It would not be easy to recall any Budget that has been so widely approved, though it grants no relief of taxation, and paints none too bright a picture of the national finances. Happily the instinct of our people is to prefer sound finance to everything. Perhaps no other country in the world would hail the restoration of the integrity of the sinking fund as a matter for national rejoicings. In the City, where the reputation of the Chancellor as the pilot of the gold standard already stood high, his new Budget, with its abolition of the Trade Facilities Acts, and its change from a three-year to a one-year basis for income tax assessment, is regarded with exceptional friendliness. The City knows, and the nation will soon have cause to learn, that without standards of Governmental finance severe to the point of austerity, the conversion of the debt, which is our main hope of lower taxes, is well-nigh impossible. It is because he has reaffirmed those standards that Mr. Churchill's second Budget is, on its broad lines, assured of a prosperous voyage.

#### BETTING

In some of its details it will occasion strenuous opposition. The forces are already mobilizing against the new levy on betting. Those who oppose the tax do so, of course, with sincerity and conviction, but none the less the mistaken reasoning on which they build their case is just of that kind which has wrongly earned for us a national reputation for hypocrisy. Many regard drinking as immoral, but they do not on that account oppose a tax on beer. Whether betting be immoral or no, it flourishes, and no one can stop it. What can be the harm, then, of facing the fact and imposing a fine (in the form of taxation) for the good of the State on those who indulge in the vicious practice? Voices are already heard prophesying that the tax will be a failure and cannot be collected. Let those who hear them remember the jeremiads with which the Silk Tax was heralded last year and note further what a conspicuous success that tax has proved on the first year's working.

#### COMING EVENTS

Two interesting points in Mr. Churchill's Budget speech referred to future years. One—an extremely important one, if it meant what we take it to mean—was that estimates of the fighting services are to be considered as a whole. This would appear to foreshadow the establishment of a

single Ministry of Defence, a reform which we strongly favour, and one which provides almost the only means left of making a substantial reduction in national expenditure, short of curtailing the State's social programme. The other point is a comparatively minor one, but of importance to a growing body of the public. The Chancellor expressed his intention of replacing the present horse-power tax on motor vehicles by a tax on petrol. This has always seemed to us a fairer way of collecting revenue from the motorist, for it makes him pay exactly in proportion as he uses the roads.

#### THE RUSSO-GERMAN TREATY

Were it possible to play the game of politics with detachment, we doubt whether the Russo-German Treaty would frighten anybody. It stands to reason that as long as Germany is virtually unarmed, and without those trade and territorial facilities which will enable her to pay her reparations and recover her prosperity, she will be reluctant to do anything in the League or outside it which will offend her one great potential market, Russia. Herr Stresemann has declared that his Treaty in no way affects Germany's obligations under the League Covenant, and, although his Note which accompanies the Treaty is not worded very diplomatically, we see no reason for doubting the sincerity of his assurance. The League is not a League against Russia, and there is, therefore, every reason to rejoice if any member, or future member, of the League is able to bring Russia a little way along the road to arbitration and a saner view of international relationships in general.

#### ITS INFLUENCE

Unfortunately politics are seldom studied from a rational point of view, and it is still the custom to attribute to your international opponent even baser motives than you imagine inspire your rivals round the parish pump. The British Government appears to be undisturbed by the terms of the Russo-German Treaty, and probably M. Briand himself is still cool and collected, but France's allies in Eastern Europe are agitated, and the danger of the Treaty lies less in its terms than in the reaction it is having in those countries which fear Russia, or Germany, or both. It is to be hoped that a little reflection will show these anxious Governments that Russia, thus indirectly linked to the League and Western Europe, will be less of a danger to them in the future than she has been in the past. The Russo-German Treaty is no menace to them, since Moscow is willing to conclude similar treaties with them whenever they please.

#### A WORD IN SEASON

Provided the Russo-German Treaty does not lead to serious and artificial complications, the prospects of Germany's membership of the League in September would seem to have become considerably brighter during the past few days. Lord Cecil has been able to make, in the House of Lords, a tardy declaration to the effect that past British promises to Spain or any other countries to support their claims to a permanent seat on the

Council will no longer be allowed to hamper the election of Germany. This statement will have welcome repercussions elsewhere. Apparently, too, Brazilian enthusiasm over the action of Senhor Mello-Franco in March is on the wane. Lastly, Persia has sent in a well-reasoned demand for a permanent seat, as sole representative in the League of the Islamic countries. Since the Council obviously cannot include everybody, these various claims should enable the Committee to recommend that the only additional permanent seat should be allotted to Germany.

#### FRANCE AND HER DEBTS

M. Briand is making such a laudable effort to fund the foreign debts of France that we must hope the new delay in reaching a settlement in the United States will be a short one. As in the case of M. Caillaux, so in the case of M. Bérenger, agreement seems to have been imperilled by premature announcements in the French Press. Some of the comments which have appeared in Paris are certainly not of a nature to encourage the Senate in an attitude which many of its members sincerely believe to be generous. M. Bérenger agrees to pay in the long run more than M. Caillaux offered, but the annuities during the first five years will be smaller. M. Raoul Péret has rather naturally postponed his visit to London until his terms have been definitely accepted in America, but when he does come here he will probably find Mr. Churchill quite ready to agree to the conditions M. Caillaux accepted last year. If we do not expect the total payment to be increased as a result of the American settlement, we also do not expect the preliminary payments to be decreased.

#### OURSELVES AND TURKEY

The British Government is to be congratulated on its efforts to reach an agreement with Angora. There can, of course, be no substantial alteration in the Irak frontier as drawn up by the League of Nations Council, and we very much hope that there is no truth in the suggestion that Great Britain proposes to conclude a Neutrality Pact similar to that between Turkey and France, since this Pact is undoubtedly a breach of the League Covenant, whereby neutrality is ruled out in the event of an attack on one of the League's members. But the new Turkey needs economic facilities more than territory, and it is well worth our while to give her every assistance on the road to economic prosperity. She will then be less tempted to make use of the many opportunities she will undoubtedly have to foment discontent among the tribes in the Mosul Vilayet.

#### THE CALCUTTA RIOTS

Rioting in Calcutta has now become chronic. Apart from the *goondahs*, usually imported by the *marwaris* as bodyguards, who remain on as blackguards, the population of that great city consists of the softest races in India. Yet order cannot be restored there. It is absurdly pretended that this collapse of control has nothing at all to do with the workings of the political

machinery set-up in 1919. The truth is that the "reforms" almost at once aroused communal animosities, which had long been dormant, and at the same time weakened British prestige. Certain Hindu and Mohammedan leaders may discuss, as they are doing at Delhi next week, the desirability of suspending the *Shuddi* and *Tabligh* movements, but the forces behind these missionary campaigns, these efforts to strengthen Hinduism and Mohammedanism by recovery of castes and groups long ago lost to this religion or that, cannot be checked with Home Rule in sight. In 1919 the Government of this country started the scramble for power in India; these are its early consequences, and worse may follow.

#### THAMES BRIDGES

The battle of the bridges has been carried a step further by the report which the London Traffic Advisory Committee has prepared for the Prime Minister, and apparently Rennie's bridge has met its Waterloo. Readers of this REVIEW, in common with all people of taste, will profoundly regret that this masterpiece must go, but in face of the reported recommendations of the Committee nothing further is likely to be done to save it. More than one of the Committee's conclusions are controversial. The Committee are of opinion that a St. Paul's Bridge should be constructed at once, but that the question of a road bridge at Charing Cross can be postponed, although they admit that Westminster Bridge is already playing to capacity and is even showing signs of wear, and that were it to become unsafe the problem of transferring its traffic elsewhere would be an acute one. How do they square these two contradictory conclusions? Is a new bridge at St. Paul's really so urgent a necessity as a new bridge at Charing Cross, particularly in view of the fact that the beauty of London would be definitely enhanced by a broad new spanning of the river here and by the transference of the railway station to the south side of the river, thus eliminating that ghastly eyesore, the present Charing Cross railway bridge?

#### PRESERVING THE LAKES

We are cordially in sympathy with those who are agitating for control of the process called "development," in the Lake District. By no means is it possible to prevent new buildings, the opening of new roads, the multiplication of things that would have upset Wordsworth and elicited invective from Ruskin. Change, and in some ways for the worse, there must be. But it can be circumscribed; it can be governed by regulations which would save a very beautiful part of the country from being marred by utterly incongruous buildings. It should be quite possible to lay it down that all new developments shall respect the sky-line in certain parts of the district, and that all buildings shall more or less closely conform to the regional type. But action must not long be delayed. Another few years, and it will be too late. What is needed is a Board of Control, with local and national representatives armed with powers which Parliament ought to provide.



## THE BUDGET

THE best feature of a soundly unsensational Budget is the one for which very likely Mr. Churchill will get the least general credit. We mean his raising of the Sinking Fund to £60,000,000. That is a kind of operation which the average man as a rule is content to leave to the appreciation of experts. Yet it does not need more than a normal knowledge of, and interest in, the national finances to assess its value. Roughly speaking, we are spending half the revenue we raise on meeting the service of our debts. There can be little hope of lighter taxation until that abnormal state of affairs is modified. It can only be modified if the burden of interest is eased by the conversion of the war loans on more favourable terms. For that the credit of the State is the deciding factor, and the credit of the State very largely turns on the inviolability of the Sinking Fund. Last year it was raided to pay part of the coal subsidy. All subsidies are dubious, but a subsidy raised by borrowing borders on the limit of financial heresy. The Chancellor has wisely pledged himself not to repeat that highly irregular stroke. If the developments of the coal situation lead to further demands upon the Treasury they will be met from the revenue, produced by immediate and substantial increases in both direct and indirect taxation.

Meanwhile Mr. Churchill undoes what he can of the mischief wrought by his one serious lapse from orthodoxy. He devotes nearly two-thirds of the estimated surplus of the coming year to replacing what he withdrew from the sinking fund and to bringing that reservoir of the nation's credit up to its original capacity. The advantages of that policy go beyond the fact that the luxury of the coal subsidy will thus be provided out of revenue. Within the next eighteen months some £400,000,000 of debt matures, and the Treasury will have to undertake conversion operations on the heroic scale. It will do so with far more hope of success and with a much brighter prospect of relief to the taxpayer now that Mr. Churchill by re-establishing the Sinking Fund has signalized his preference for the quiet and exacting canons of sound finance. Our monetary affairs since the Armistice have not always been handled with a sense of realism. Even now there are people who do not understand that the War enormously impoverished us as a nation, whatever it may have done for this or that individual or section. But on the whole successive Chancellors of the Exchequer during the past six years have trod the known paths, resisted the seductive by-ways that have been the undoing of every country that has ventured upon them, and have kept in view the simple and shining principles that Budgets must be made to balance and that debts have to be paid. Some £700,000,000 of floating debt wiped off since 1919, the gold standard restored, and a sinking fund of £50,000,000 a year accepted as an irreducible minimum, are a record of achievement and a testimony to national good sense of which we have some right to be proud. Mr. Churchill's own contributions to this great work of salvage and rebuilding have shown the boldness of true Conservatism. He has done something effective

towards curbing expenditure. He risked the restoration of the gold standard and the event has abundantly justified him. He has now still further strengthened confidence and stability by placing the sinking fund on a pedestal of security from which, whatever the emergency, no future Chancellor is likely to dislodge it.

Compared with this act of real financial statesmanship, everything else in the Budget is of transitory moment. But three or four of its proposals and innovations have an interest, if not an importance, that will bring them into disproportionate prominence. The decision not to renew the Trade Facilities Acts scarcely perhaps comes under this category, because nobody now regards the repeal of those measures as other than overdue. They belong to those early hectic post-Armistice days when the Government thought it could create trade by a wave of the official wand. All that it succeeded in doing was mortgaging British credit to the tune of £75,000,000 on behalf of a few fortunate firms that were mainly engaged in enterprises for which financial support was not forthcoming, usually for sufficient reasons, in the ordinary way; and such justification as they ever seemed to possess they have long since lost through the cheapening of money and the abundant evidence that sound undertakings can command the backing they deserve. There will be very few to regret their non-renewal. Fewer still, again, will mourn the abolition of the three-year average system of assessment to income-tax. The change to the preceding year as the basis of calculation is fairer, simplifies administration and should not only prove more productive but ought to lead in the end to the whole business of levying and collecting taxes on income being brought under a uniform and much less complicated code. These three excellent features of the Budget are more or less non-controversial. The increased taxation on the heavier type of motor vehicle has also so much to commend it that it can hardly become a very contentious issue. It is otherwise, however, with some of Mr. Churchill's schemes. His suggestion of a ten years' guarantee for the duties imposed by the Safeguarding of Industries Act and for the articles that now enjoy Imperial Preference is sure to be hotly contested, partly because the policy embodied in those Acts is not universally approved and partly because no Parliament can bind its successors, and a guarantee of the kind proposed can thus furnish only the semblance of security and not its substance. The raid on the Road Fund, again, excites a good many Liberals, but there cannot be the least doubt as to either its financial necessity or its constitutional propriety. The real battle of the Budget will thus be fought over the new tax on credit betting. It is a tax we heartily approve, partly because betting is an amusement that ought rightly to pay its toll to the Exchequer and partly because the imposition of the tax will gradually force a change in the Gaming Acts. At present those Acts discriminate indefensibly between rich and poor, and constitute one of the very few examples the British Statute Book can show of legislation that is destitute of the support of public opinion.

Mr. Churchill, therefore, hardly exaggerates in claiming that his Budget is the most agreed Budget of modern times. The picture he has drawn of the national finances does not err on the side of



1 May 1926

optimism. With the sagging of some of the great stand-bys of revenue and the stoppage of a number of miscellaneous sources of income, and the impaired resiliency of British trade, the outlook for the next few years cannot be other than sombre. But it is not hopeless. If it is faced with the spirit and the sense of balance that he has brought to his task and if the pre-requisite of industrial peace is forthcoming, ten years after the close of the war should find us on an even keel.

### THE COSMIC BREATH

THE progress of uncontrolled industrialism has left us, especially in the north, a series of devastated areas as large and at least as thoroughly ruined as the better advertised devastated areas of Northern France. Wigan stands as an awful warning against the horrors of unregulated economic exploitation, just as surely as Ypres against militarism gone mad. Neither of them need happen again, if we have honestly tried to learn their lessons. The dispersal of a large and incorrigibly urban population over the countryside, which began with the motor and is still not only proceeding but gaining impetus, is obviously a movement that needs to be controlled in order to avoid a repetition of the mistakes of a hundred years ago. Left to itself it tends to produce undesirable "ribbons" along the main roads, which, as Professor Abercrombie points out in his excellent little book,\* is the most wasteful of all forms of distributing houses. It also tends to favour a style of architecture entirely incongruous with the landscape, to multiply eyesores and to show in every way the unpleasant antithesis of that instinct for fitting in with their surroundings which used to be the chief virtue of English countrymen.

This movement must be moulded into such a form as to preserve the English countryside with as little disturbance as possible, and it must be moulded quickly, for the revolution, rapid enough already, will proceed infinitely faster once trade begins to revive. To keep the country as a sort of museum and discourage development indiscriminately would be unwise even if it could be seriously contemplated: what is desirable is simply to see that the development is carried out as far as possible with the same nice feeling for appropriateness that was always shown towards it up to a hundred years ago. Much prohibitory and compulsory legislation will be needed to guard against the incorrigible spoiler, though, as Professor Abercrombie fully realizes, "there should be above all a light hand in compulsion, but a heavy hand on outrage."

Powers of control are by no means so small, even now, as they are often thought to be, but they suffer through being as chaotic and unco-ordinated as the developments they aspire to regulate. In order to stamp out anarchy in development the first need is for a co-ordinated authority working under consolidated powers to supersede the infinite variety of authorities at present responsible. Professor Abercrombie's suggestions in this respect are conservative; he advocates merely that the misleading term "town-planning" should be changed to "rural planning" where

the countryside is concerned; that where there is a regional committee it should be made the statutory authority for administering the plan in rural districts, except the most progressive, and that where there is no regional committee, rural planning shall be entrusted to the county council, urban districts of over 20,000 population keeping their present independent status. An objection to this alternative is that county councils, as the cheers of the L.C.C. have proclaimed to the world, have no souls and are often drawn very largely from classes which ought to be not the regulators but the regulated. Rural planning is so specialized a subject and so far beyond the normal agenda and imagination of a county council that it would be more desirable to have the most representative regional committee possible set up where none already exists. The very urban standpoint of the present legislation is an obstacle to progress, and too many of the cities which made a brave show of foresight in the Government Pavilion at Wembley do not betray either in themselves or their surrounding country any signs of their ideals being put into practice.

In discussing what the general aim of rural planning ought to be Professor Abercrombie very aptly quotes the Chinese *Feng-Shui*, the science of "adapting the residence of the living and the dead so as to co-operate and harmonize with the local currents of the cosmic breath." The cosmic breath has to work by itself at Kensal Green; it comes in distressful spasms even over Hindhead:

Missionaries establishing themselves in some remote valley and building a neat corrugated iron tabernacle with spiked bell turret have been indignantly surprised when the population has arisen and massacred them—not by reason of any objection to their religious teaching, but because the pitch of the roof was, perhaps, too steep, or the spike of their bell turret should have been domed or square-topped.

He seems to believe, though he does not actually say so, that we might profitably return the Chinese compliment of sending a mission to study European finances by going to China to learn how a countryside can be used without being desecrated. The picturesqueness of the English landscape is, as a rule, least blemished where the life of the place is most stagnant; wherever there is progress ugliness flourishes and it needs little foresight to see that if the hoped-for Revival of Rural England happens before anything has been done to relearn the lost science of *Feng-Shui* it must involve aesthetically the Ruin of Rural England, which, in fact, is already taking place wherever there is money enough to effect it.

It is a question of checking ignorant vandalism by legislation until we can revive the same instinctive sense of fitness which our ancestors undoubtedly had and which the nineteenth century lost. The compulsion is necessary for the present, but it is not the essential thing: the essential thing is to destroy the frame of mind which can see nothing wrong with all these atrocities. And this type of mind, it is well to remember, is very strongly represented on councils and administrative bodies. There was some reason in the question lately asked whether men become district councillors because they hate beauty or hate beauty because they have become district councillors. The clause in the Bath Corporation Act whereby the corporation may refer the plans of any building likely seriously to disfigure the city to a committee of three (an F.R.I.B.A. and an F.S.I., nominated by their

\* "The Preservation of Rural England." By Patrick Abercrombie. Hodder and Stoughton. 1s. net.

presidents, and a J.P. appointed by, but not a member of, the Council), the decisions of which have the same validity as if they had been made by the corporation, and are enforced, with no appeal, on penalty of a huge fine, is drastic enough to satisfy the most vindictive hater of ugliness. It needs such a body, technically qualified and distinct from the local authority, to ensure that vandalism shall be put down, without fear or favour; merely to put our trust in councillors is not enough.

Progress at present is not really being retarded by a lack of legislation; it is waiting for a more vigorous and widespread support from public opinion, and that can only grow up through a great many more people taking some interest in the preservation of both town and country. There can be no more admirable introduction to the subject than Professor Abercrombie's little book, which deserves to be widely read and to succeed in its object of rescuing from ignorant degradation the finest countryside in the world.

### PREMIER AND IDEALIST

NOW that the Prime Minister's addresses both on politics and other subjects\* are collected, we are able to form an impression of his character and policy which Press notices, with their natural prejudice one way or the other, could not convey. The pipe recorded with the face on the frontispiece, and repeated on the paper cover, though it has a silver band, is not a cigar, and indicates that plain, honest Englishman which Mr. Baldwin professes to be. He is, indeed, admirably honest, and we can believe all that he says. The "habit of truth," he protests, is "our finest national asset," and it is one that some of our politicians have forgotten. He is a democrat, and business has taught him that there are no such things as supermen. And "England" figures rightly with prominence in his title. He has an excellent understanding of the roots of England in the country, and talks with effective simplicity of the joys of country life. He boasts of Shropshire (though with a misquotation):

A country of easy livers,  
The quietest under the sun.

He notes that a well-known lady in society once asked a friend of his, "Is the new Prime Minister an educated man?" This volume is a sufficient answer to that, for, though Mr. Baldwin regrets that he wasted his time at the University, he has made up for it since. His family have achieved scholarship against odds in the past, and he feels that he might have kept up the tradition. He is well read; he can quote effectively; and he can address the Classical Association with applause. He can even recall possible ancestors of his name in the past, though we think that a student of the two imperial Baldwins in Gibbon, while admiring their piety, may have grave doubts of their competence as rulers. He has yet another advantage. He has been associated with a family business, seen men at work, realized their difficulties, and done his generous best to relieve them. Through-

out the volume the main theme is a protest against the poison of suspicion, a plea for more understanding, more knowledge, more mutual self-help. Above all things the Premier is an idealist, and, as we progressed through his pages, charming in their absence of cynicism and their wide sympathies, it occurred to us that we might be reading the addresses of a distinguished Liberal, or even an enlightened member of the Labour Party. Thus is he truly a national, rather than a merely party man.

Mr. Baldwin's speeches are free from the usual vices of Parliamentary orators, men who reproduce a Byzantine "discord of images, the childish play of false or unreasonable ornament, and the painful attempt to elevate themselves, and to astonish the reader, and to involve a trivial meaning in the smoke of obscurity and exaggeration."

He is doing an injustice to St. Paul when he describes him as "no orator." Has he forgotten that telling reference to the "unknown god" at Athens, or appeals skilfully varied for Jew and Gentile? He himself, though he rails at rhetoricians, is a singularly skilful speaker, with apt things for every occasion; but, "knowing as a public man the temptation of winning easy applause by saying comfortable things," he produces no "ninepence for fourpence," no exaggeration for the ear of greedy Demos. That would be a "tendency to spiritual atrophy." He can speak to Scots, Irish and Welsh with equal grace. St. Patrick's Day affords a good example of his dreamy idealism, which is more Celtic than English:

That ideal state, to which Mr. Cosgrave would lead his people along an Irish road, and to which I would lead mine along an English road, we tell each other is just over the hills. We know in our hearts we shall never reach it, but if we did not believe that it was only just over the hills, we should never have the strength to go through that dreary, dusty walk in attending to the needs of the caravan on its journey day by day throughout this world.

He has, too, a nice sense of humour, which comes out when he praises Walter Scott, and explains to a Scottish audience that:

while we are looking at you with the vision of the Wizard of the North, wrapped in admiration, you attend strictly to business.

Parliamentary figures are well celebrated, some literary men less well, in scraps hardly worth reprinting. We can call Mr. Wells a master of speculation, or of those changing views our time is rich in, but hardly a "master of English." We can understand that Mr. Baldwin was too busy amid the press of thronging duties to revise his book, but surely others could have done it for him. Has he no friends, no secretaries who could have applied the advantage of the *ultima manus*? No lover of literature can see with pleasure the present casual way of producing books, and we look for better examples in high places. Mr. Baldwin for all his native candour is no plain man, but an artist. He should not have left a Board with a singular verb in one sentence, and a plural one in the next. He has changed Browning's "enclitic *De*" into Greek form, but we presume that it did not get its accent from the Classical Association.

\* 'On England and other Addresses.' By the Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin. Allan. 12s. 6d. net.



## THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

*House of Commons, Thursday*

DECIDEDLY, this has been Mr. Churchill's week. He has made two speeches of remarkable and contrasting quality. The first was the Budget speech, every line of which had probably been committed to memory; the second, a speech winding up the general discussion and replying to the criticisms of his opponents, which precedes the Budget resolutions, all of which was intended to sound impromptu and much must have been. Of the Budget speech, the first impulse was to say that it was a tale twice told and was dull, until we discovered that the two hours for which the speech lasted had seemed like twenty minutes, and then we realized that it was one of those classics which in arrangement and expression are so inevitably right as to appear commonplace. The Budget speech was a triumph not, indeed, of idea, but of the classic form which Mr. Churchill is almost alone among Party orators in cultivating.

If the Budget speech impressed by its restraint and its sparing use of ornament, the second, replying to criticisms, was a success of debate. Lord Balfour once said of Mr. Churchill that he carried heavy but not very mobile guns. But here was calibre and mobility both. The crushing reply to Mr. Snowden's violent and indiscreet speech had evidently been prepared for all its appearance of spontaneity; but the passages on the betting tax towards the end, which could not have been prepared beforehand, were as effective as anything he has ever done in debate. The really dangerous argument against the tax is that it will encourage illegal street betting and penalize the more reputable or at any rate the more comfortable forms. He had to meet the complaint of the discreet and prosperous elder brother against the prodigal. He did it by painting a contrast between the happy state of the turf commission agent and the sad state of the turf touts in back alleys. Was the merchant prince of the trade going to turn a pedlar and hawker, harried by the police? Was the backer to forsake his handy telephone and to sally forth, slip and half-crown in hand, to put both surreptitiously in the hand of some tout that he hardly knew? Of course not. But comfort and safety must be paid for. In the one direction we turn the policeman; in the other we turn the customs officer—what could be fairer?

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What is there about Mr. Churchill that makes his speeches so fascinating? It is not their substance, certainly not their fecundity of ideas. He is not one of those geniuses who cannot drop a sentence that is barren. He is not a heaven-born Chancellor of the Exchequer, and apart from his permanent officials it is doubtful whether he has an idea of his own on finance. Gorgeous as the pattern of his thought can be, the material is usually not of first-rate quality. The great gift that Mr. Churchill has over all other politicians is that his speeches always give the sense of pulsation with the life-beat of history. He is the only living professor of the grand manner; he is, despite his modern instances, a survivor of a past generation in his political idiom alike of thought and expression. He is not a rhetorician in the same sense as Mr. Lloyd George. He argues you into consent, but does not bamboozle. For he is, despite his loose moorings, the most scrupulous and exact man in his argument. In his mental processes he is the most honest man in politics, not even excepting Mr. Baldwin himself. Alas, he has ceased to dream dreams and see visions. For everything in the Budget there are reasons plentiful as blackberries and all beautifully ripe. But of glowing hope for the future, of any message for the encouragement of trade or commerce

or of comfort for the middle-class ground between the tax-gatherer and nether mill of organized trade-unionism the Budget is sadly innocent.

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It is a pity that Sir Robert Horne has got the name of speaking only for Big Business; there would be no better leader of some Conservative organization for the protection of the middle classes. His speech on Wednesday was quite the best thing he has done since the collapse of the Coalition. I have heard it said that he and Mr. Churchill have never got over their old rivalry for the Chancellorship and there was certainly an acid taste in some of his criticisms, notably of the trick that the Treasury has of always blaming the House of Commons for rise in expenditure. The sole responsibility for expenditure, as Sir Robert Horne insisted, is with the Government, which governs, or should do. The change in war which makes generals conduct their battles from some point far in the rear has had its counterpart in politics. There is not enough leadership or "you-be-damnedness" (as a celebrated politician once called it).

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Neither the Labour Party nor the Liberals have made much show in the Budget debates. Why Mr. Snowden, personally the most amiable of men, should be so violent and extreme a critic is one of the puzzles of politics. His speech on Tuesday was an almost perfect example of the forcible-feeble, and this habit that politicians have of wilfully exaggerating their differences and talking as though every one, the moment he takes his seat on the Front Treasury Bench, suddenly becomes a scoundrel and a fool must make our Parliamentary affairs very puzzling to the man outside. In the absence of Mr. Lloyd George since Monday, Mr. Runciman's speech must be taken to be a statement of the official Liberal position, but the quality of the thought was poor and smug.

Much better were the speeches of Sir John Simon and Mr. Hilton Young. Sir John Simon is becoming quite human of late, and his speech in which he threw over the high moral argument against the betting tax, was in his position and connexions an act of real intellectual courage and honesty. Mr. Hilton Young's moorings to the Liberal Party are ready to snap at any moment and he is virtually these days an independent Conservative. Criticism like his is of real value to the Conservative Party. Like others, he fell foul of Mr. Snowden's extraordinary dictum that high taxation made little difference to the prosperity of trade provided that the proceeds were not spent on national defence, and calculated that the present high level of taxation was depressing the middle-classes, which supplied the nervous energy of the nation and depriving it of five per cent. of its efficiency. Incidentally, another passage in Mr. Snowden's speech showed that the Labour idea of nationalizing or controlling the banks must now be taken seriously and has definitely become part of responsible Labour policy.

All through the Budget debates there have been alarms and excursions without. For, of course, the whole of this Budget goes by the board if there is a coal strike. In the circumstances Mr. Churchill's allocation of an extra ten millions to the Sinking Fund, in addition to the statutory fifty millions, must be regarded as an almost defiant "furthest north" towards the frozen Pole. If there is a strike, we shall have to pay not only in the losses and suffering incidental to this obsolete and barbarous method of settling trade disputes by pacific blockade of the rest of the community, but in "whacking" new taxation which we were warned would touch all classes in the community. Mr. Churchill is tightening his belt.

SECOND CITIZEN



## APOLOGY FOR PUNTERS

By GERALD GOULD

THE horse is a noble animal, but when you put money on him he will not do so. Such, is my small experience of the art, science and hobby of horse-racing: it must be the general experience, or how should the bookmakers live at your expense? It would seem to follow that betting is foolish; and mankind, reading this article and facing the fact, will incontinently stop it. Bang will go the bookmakers—and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Yet—you would scarcely believe it—there are occasions when men persist in plain and patent folly. One who might be saving and investing his pence will (I have known the thing done) order and drink a glass of beer because he likes it. The man who drove the dray was observed by Mr. Chesterton, if I remember right, to be openly not reading Henry James. The poet Henley put it flatly:

Why in seeming wise  
Waste your breath?  
Everybody dies—  
And of death!

I think we may take it that money, and even shirts, will continue to be put on horses. The feather-pate of folly will still bear the falling sky. The punter will, thanks to Mr. Churchill, pay a little more heavily for his whims; he would lack the true spirit and hidalgo-like insouciance of punting if he were deterred by that. Our betters do not put down their money with much hope of seeing it again. It is the great mistake of moralists to suppose that we humans are creatures of reason, to be deflected from our course by consequences. It is the act we enjoy, not the thin and distant hope of profit. People bet because they enjoy betting. It is art for art's sake.

I can prove this by a true story. It was told me by a friend of mine, whose name is well known in the worlds of literature and the stage: no doubt the fellow has himself turned an honest guinea by dressing it somewhere in print, but it is too good to be wasted on its author: he will not grudge me the secondary rights. He was surrounded, as I am, by grave, "sound" men—editors, literary editors, assistant-editors, sports-editors, cross-word-puzzle editors—and all of them put money upon horses. My friend felt, as I feel, rather like the soul of the Emperor Hadrian. It is a lonesome and bloodless life, never to put money on horses. So my friend went to a sports-editor and equipped himself for the business; learnt the great language, caught the clear accents; and adopted a system. He betted regularly for six months, and then returned to the sports-editor and complained bitterly that he was ten pounds down. "My dear sir," cried the sports-editor, in a very frenzy of congratulation, "you have been *exceptionally* successful!" It was then that my friend gave up betting.

You may think that the end of this story disproves the moral for which I called it up. Not a bit of it. My friend was only a literary man. Most people are made of sterner stuff; most people know that they ought to rate the game above the prize; most people in the betting world are in it, as the saying goes, for their health.

Gambling, like eating or drinking or making love,

may be, in its excess, a cruelty, a dishonour—

bloody,  
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,  
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name—

it may pour revenues and reputations down the trough of imbecility—it may dance upon the sanctities of the hearth and of the tomb. Granted. But not by the denunciation of extravagances will virtue eliminate the love of uncertainty from the human heart. Man will take chances so long as there is anything left to take. He must do so. To be alive is to be a gambler.

Stake your pieces, ladies and gentlemen! The wheel is spinning: you can bet on numbers, or colours, or odds or evens—on heads, hearts, votes and dreams. The one thing you cannot do is to button your banknotes safely to your ethical chest, and say you will not play. There is only a single door out of the gaming room; and it leads to your last and solitary bed.

Of course, as usual, there are two opposite lessons to be drawn from the same fact. It may fairly be argued that, since life anyway allows so great a scope for the zest of the improbable, we should not go ranging after artificial excitements. Or it may fairly be argued that, since so much is insecure, a little more will make no difference. The former is the safer line; but taking it, and honouring prudence in its due place, let us never forget that to arrogate prudence to ourselves is to challenge a great mystery—that to think ourselves prudent falls something short of being humble. Anacreon has a wickedly plausible ode in aid of drinking, which Cowley adapted thus:

Nothing in nature's sober found,  
But an eternal health goes round.  
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,  
Fill all the glasses there—for why  
Should every creature drink but I?  
Why, man of morals, tell me why?

But there is a flaw in the analogy, equally obvious if one transfers the argument from drinking to betting.

Reason is perceptibly seducing me to the side of the moralists. And still the fact remains that uncertainty is as necessary to life as air: is indeed, like air, a part of the substance of living. That anything may happen to anybody is the heart of all the fairy stories in the world. It is the only fairy story in the world. The swineherd may wed the princess, Jack may kill the giant, the cat may look to be a king. And who can breathe without his fairy story? The average, moderate punter, though you might not guess it by his hat or his waistcoat, is looking for fairies. His exterior semblance doth belie his soul's immense and touching credulity. But the point is that his credulity has an inner wisdom: he is not such a fool as he seems. He merely encourages himself to *suppose* that he will make money: he *knows* that he will get the thrill of supposing it. Every bet is a safe bet: you pay your money for the joy of betting. And, so doing, you realize your oneness with your kind. You have the same chance as the next man. Only one horse will win, only one number will turn up; that is the inequality of luck. But that inequality is the thing in which we are all equal.

Let Mr. Churchill, then, tax betting. Let the moralists denounce the ugliness of its excesses. Only, when next you see a seedy individual handing up his shilling by the race-course, remember to think of him as Jason, and Don Quixote, and the Fairy Prince.



Dramatis Personae. No. 201

By 'Quiz'

ORGANIZED CAPITAL AND LABOUR BOTH EQUALLY SHOCKED AT THE DEMAND FOR  
RESPONSIBILITY RATHER THAN SECURITY

## ON NOT HEARING WHITEMAN'S BAND

BY J. B. PRIESTLEY

MR. PAUL WHITEMAN and his band have just given what is advertised to be their last concert here; and I have not heard them play. I have heard Mr. Specht and Mr. Lopez and their bands, and other rhythmic-symphonic-syncopated-combinations (I think that is how the jargon runs) from America; but not a note from Mr. Whiteman, who is, I gather, the very emperor of these jazz masters. My abstention has been deliberate, for the very thought of sitting in the Albert Hall listening for two hours or so to Mr. Whiteman's or any other jazz band appals me. If I am to sit solemnly in a concert hall with a programme in my hand, then I want a proper orchestra and the Brandenburg Concerto or the overture to the 'Magic Flute.' Jazz taking itself seriously is a bore. It has nothing to say in a concert-hall, with its puerile Symphonies in Blue and foolish trifling with music written for other purposes than jazz, that cannot be said a thousand times more pleasantly and effectively by even a mediocre ordinary orchestra. Once it emerges from its own atmosphere of the dance hall, the restaurant, the music hall, of tapping feet, a blue haze of smoke, and drinks all round, it really becomes the poor thing that angry choir masters and others proclaim it to be. In its own place, rhythmically expressing the easy, half-sentimental, half-cynical philosophy of the streets on love and other matters, it is admirable and it is important, one of the genuine manifestations of the spirit of the age. If posterity wishes to understand us, it will have to inquire into these strange traffickings of ours with Ukelele ladies and Kentucky and the rest, which will be, you understand, so many symbols.

Popular music, which is something between music proper and what we might call a jolly old row and exists in order that there may be always a tuneful noise going on, that does not demand too much attention, in order that young men may roar over their drinks, and old people nod their heads, popular music, even the tunes apart from the words, is one key to the spirit of a time. There is half the eighteenth century in such a song as 'Shepherd, thy demeanour vary.' Those jerky, impudent Offenbach tunes, with their suggestion of cheap champagne, give us the very soul of the Second Empire. A comparison of the overwhelmingly popular music hall songs, from 'The Grandfather's Clock' and 'Tommy Make Room For Your Uncle' (which you may hear for yourself in Mr. Playfair's delightful revue), to the latest juggernauts of sound, with all their varying moods of naïve sentiment, of naughtiness, of blatant jingoism, of downright cynicism, would provide us with a social history of England. Tunes, words, and the manner of presentation, all mirror one significant characteristic of their age, and all the more significant because they catch it, as it were, off its guard, in its slippers and undress, and so tell us things that its artists and historians and philosophers have never admitted. What did they sing when they went on the spree? That is the question, and, in itself, no bad start towards a popular chorus.

Our popular music is, of course, jazz. Whatever we may think about it, there is no escaping the fact; never was a popular music so popular; its writ runs from Honolulu to Belfast; gramophones blare it in the desert, ships send it out into mid-ocean and black night; there is no escape. Angry musicians may tell us that, by an ironic stroke of circumstance, we are become in our hours of ease the slaves of American negroes, whose folk-tunes we have copied and then debased; but it is idle to pretend that we have had jazz forced upon us, for in these matters we do not suffer any domination, but accept only what pleases our taste. We may say of jazz that its nonsense suits our nonsense. And an examination of one, even should it be a little fanciful, would throw a light upon the other. There are worse places for a contemporary philosopher than the halls in which Hylton's Band or the Savoy Orpheans set the feet tapping the floor. Moreover, what he discovers there will not merely apply to England and the United States, but to the whole of Western civilization, which is for once dancing to the same tune and therefore possibly possessed by the same mood. Let us briefly walk, or, if you will, dance round the subject, leaving the grave deductions for our Betters and those columns in the newspapers that are regularly devoted to apocalyptic themes.

The first thing to be noticed about jazz is that many conceptions of its character, unquestioned either by those who like it or those who denounce it, are demonstrably false. Thus, it is generally held to be extremely rowdy. Furious old gentlemen talk of jazz as if it were nothing but one endless ear-splitting din, and thereby weaken their case against it by showing their ignorance, for actually jazz is not very noisy. It is nothing like so noisy as much of Wagner and Strauss, to say nothing of the iconoclastic young men who have improved upon them. It began by being rather rowdy, but very quickly quietened down (it is actually most delightful when played very softly) and on the score of mere noise will compare favourably with other forms of popular music. But people tell us too that it is extremely jolly, that it expresses a mood of rollicking gaiety, and thereby fall into a more subtle error. Our jazz is not so light-hearted as its first sounds. There are in it undercurrents of something far removed from gaiety. Most of the older popular music can be divided at once, into the lugubrious and the jolly, and the jolly songs and dances have a May morning care-free feeling that turns our syncopated songs and dances into so many Autumn eves. The older music runs sparkling with a thoughtless gaiety, as pleasant and unsophisticated as an old-fashioned birthday party, or an evening at Dingley Dell, but this jazz of ours is clouded with dubiousness and its gaiety at best is thin and feverish, like that of a disillusioned young person still desperately trying to have a "good time." We have remarked the gay antics of the nigger, and, overlooking our sophistication, our sunless, cool-blooded condition, we have tried to catch his happy abandon by deliberate mimicry, but something has crept in, a hint of doubt, of despair, of sad self-consciousness, to transform these easy revels of the plantation into the very different thing we know as jazz.

Knowing full well that it has to deal with a



people who live on their nerves, it begins, in a fashion different from that of any other popular music, with a deliberate assault. You can hear it saying: "I'll attack you through your nerves, through your nerves, through your nerves." It keeps the skeleton in you jumping and jangling like a marionette of old bones dangling on a string. The banjo strums and the drum pad-pads, soft but resistless, like raindrops that come in time to wear away the stone. And now your feet are tapping, your blood whipped and frothing, surely you'll stop thinking, wondering, glooming. If not then here's the saxophone, ripe, juicy, sensuous, as thick and warm and soft as the flesh that it celebrates. The piano too is in it all, with silvery showers of high notes, spangles, handfuls of them, scattered over everything. If it throbs another minute, going on so easily, with here a jerk, there a jerk, still carrying you along with it, you'll soon be forgetful, happy as a child. But no, its muted trumpets, emasculated brasses, squeal out a warning, burst into laughter, derisive, crazy, ring you round with jackasses, hyenas, and creatures of nightmare, pointing, gibbering. And then—a sudden silence, more soft throbbing, and high, wistful, in curves of mocking tenderness, the violin, the old heart-breaking violin, deriding the theme then musing on it lovingly, a Puck in the forest, a girl by the fire. Or, if you prefer it, the honest prose of the matter is that there is in this jazz a curious contradiction, a kind of self-tormenting, for it appears to aim at wild abandon and yet never loses an extreme self-consciousness; it is sensuous but cannot remain so, but must turn round and mock at its sensuousness; it is sentimental and cynical by turns; it waves away thought and yet cannot live happily in the flesh. Are these characteristics entirely novel? Have we never encountered them in any other phase of contemporary life? Such questions are answered so quickly that I do not pause for a reply.

## ART

### "HERE A LITTLE AND THERE A LITTLE"

By ANTHONY BERTRAM

OF all the exhibitions to which I went this week, the most interesting was that of Georges Seurat at the *Lefèvre Galleries*, 1A King Street, St. James's. It is the first exhibition of this master's work since 1909, and sixteen paintings and drawings have been got together. The most important is the large 'Les Poseuses' in which a portion of his most famous picture 'La Grande Jatte,' has served as background. This canvas, even in the comparatively confined space of the Lefèvre Gallery, shows to my mind as a much richer example of Seurat than the Tate Gallery picture. The construction of the figures under the flesh is suggested in a manner lamentably absent from our work, and the luminosity and transparency of the colour is masterly indeed. It should not be necessary in these days to explain the meaning of Seurat's theory of "pointillism," though a startling number of people who profess artistic culture do not know the difference between Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. I recommend any such to read the extract from Paul Signac printed

in the introduction to the catalogue of the Seurat exhibition.

The *Modern English Water-Colour Society*, who are showing again at the *St. George's Gallery*, 32A George Street, Hanover Square, have made a rapid and deserved reputation for themselves. The better known members, Messrs. Paul Nash, Ethelbert White, and Charles Ginner, show good examples of work, whose merit need not be canvassed. Among newcomers, Mr. David Jones interests me. I have seen only two of his pictures before and it would be ridiculous to attempt yet to appraise an artist so obviously feeling his way. What is derivative and irritating in his work may easily disappear, and something original may emerge. He seems to have force and invention. Miss Eleanor Hughes exhibits one very able drawing, 'Cornish Elms,' which does not, however, improve with contemplation. Her other work is below the standard of this drawing. Mr. Leon Underwood's two pictures are finely dashed off, but without any "sloppiness"; for all their apparent Turner-esque "free and easiness" they are well constructed, well considered works. A drawing by the late Francis Unwin, 'South Bank of the Thames,' is as pleasant and concise a thing as I have seen by this very distinguished painter whose career was so sadly cut short.

In the vast acreage of coloured paper at the *Royal Institute's* 117th Exhibition at their gallery in Piccadilly, there are few pictures of as great interest as any at the *St. George's Gallery*. The exception is unquestionably Mr. George Graham, all of whose exhibits are pleasing. They are clean, vigorous, open-air water-colours; they are what water-colours should be. Why cannot those other painters realize their medium, and not do sentimental subjects in oil technique? Surely Alma Tadema is dead, and surely Steer and Turner and Cotman and a hundred others have taught us what water-colour can do, and, by their very reticence, what it cannot. Several other exhibitors show work of distinction, among them Mr. S. Dennant Moss, Miss Lucy E. Pierce, Mr. William Hoggat, Sir William Orpen, Mr. Duff Tollemache, Mr. Gerald Ackermann, and Mr. Ernest W. Haslehurst.

The *Goupil Gallery* have four exhibitions; some charming water-colours by Mr. E. Barnard Lintott and able water-colour portraits by Miss F. Katherine Mayer, gay scenes from Italy by Miss Margerite Janes and various oils by Mr. F. L. Harris. Professor Tonks rightly describes Mr. Harris as "a young man of promise." It is true that he has lived fifty-six years, but he has only recently begun painting. It is a very great pity that he did not begin before; we must wish him an abnormal length of life, because he is already a most attractive and stimulating artist. His work shows modern influence well absorbed into a sincere respect for the appearances of things. He has great originality of composition and a keen sense of the character of landscape. I do not care greatly for his figure subjects, but I greet him as a bright and newly risen star.

The *Leicester Galleries* are holding a memorial exhibition of the work of the late Francis Derwent Wood, which displays his versatility.

## FORTHCOMING PLAYS

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE. 'The Ringer.' On Saturday, May 1.  
ALDWYCH THEATRE. Repertory Players in 'Distinguished Villa.' On Sunday, May 2.  
Q THEATRE. 'The Gay Georgette.' On Monday, May 3.  
THE OLD VIC. 'Much Ado About Nothing.' On Monday, May 3.  
SAVOY THEATRE. 'Intimate Enemies.' On Tuesday, May 4.  
HOLBORN EMPIRE. 'As You Like It' (Matinee). On Thursday, May 6.

## THE THEATRE SWEETNESS AND BLIGHT

BY IVOR BROWN

*Every One has his Fault.* By Elizabeth Inchbald. Played at the East London College. April 22.  
*The Denville Stock Company.* New Oxford Theatre.  
*The North London Players.* Collins's Theatre, Islington.

PROFESSOR ALLARDYCE NICOLL must be one of those young men who have years ago determined to take Mr. Arnold Bennett's advice and live on twenty-four hours a day. If there is any task that is likely to lacerate a man's love for his fellows, to grind his patience to fragments, and finally to drive him into penitential rustication, it is the organization of special theatrical performances. There are a dozen or more societies whose officials go through this form of torture for the benefit of Sabbath-breaking playgoers, and Professor Nicoll, not content with being a copious historian and lecturing his students on the late eighteenth-century theatre, actually joins the self-tormentors by rehearsing, with professional casts, the plays on which he lectures and showing the actual product in the same building in which the student applies himself to the written word. At present Professor Nicoll is demonstrating by precept and practice that the London stage of the 1780's and 1790's was not as dead as we are apt to think that it was. History works in odd ways and injustice is its fruit. The tradition has picked out Sheridan and Goldsmith for eternal glory as though they had no colleagues or rivals or immediate successors fit to take snuff in their company. Professor Nicoll disputes this and puts his arguments on the stage. 'The Dramatist,' by Frederick Reynolds, proved to be very great fun. Mrs. Inchbald's play, shown last week, is not so racy, although Mr. Norman V. Norman rode his part with characteristic vigour and virtuosity. But it is none the less a model piece for the student. In it two centuries meet.

Mr. Norman's part, by name Sir Robert Ramble, is simply the naughty old codger who had been stumping about the stage, all periwig and peccadilloes, since Wycherley's day. By the time that Mrs. Inchbald had him in hand he could boast as healthy a florescence as the bay-tree and as long an innings as Johnnie Walker. But Sir Robert is only half the play; on the other side are Irwin and Lady Irwin and Edward, their "chee-ild." Her ladyship is of tears a perpetual fountain because her husband is of disasters a collector on the scale of Job. Deserving but penniless, desperate for love of wife and child he robs the grim father-in-law who had frowned upon the daughter's match and drawn the purse-strings so cruelly tight against her. But reconciliation is at hand. Master Edward intervenes, and what crusty grandpa can snarl in the face of a child? If Sir Robert Ramble casts a sinister glance back to the age of Lady Wishfort, Lady Irwin and her son cast a tear forward to the age of Copperfield's Dora. The Irwinian episodes in this play are exactly like those chunks of a Dickens novel which the greatest admirers of the essential Dickens will assuredly skip.

What made Mrs. Inchbald's piece so interesting was the plain evidence that the good woman had been, in a most pure and literary sense, familiar with that Man of Sentiment who had been hovering so long at the stage-door of the eighteenth-century theatre. It was the women, needless to say, who let him in. There was Sheridan's mother, latterly introduced to our stage by Mr. Aldous Huxley. Then came Mrs. Inchbald and with the assistance of the Man of Sentiment she mothered the stage-child who has been sobbing and smirking and mending hard adult hearts in melodrama, legitimate and pictorial, ever since. If Sir Robert is the heir of the Pliants and Pinchwives, Master Edward is the ancestor of Little Willy. The Man of Sentiment had not only forced the door; he had become a new

man in the process, in short the Man of Sentimentality. He came in with the nineteenth century and when shall we see him depart? He came as a donor of sweetness to an acid world and his excessive generosity has plastered the stage and the shelf with a very deluge of saccharine deposit. Out of the sour came forth sweetness; out of the sweetness came forth blight.

The drama (or may we not say the melodrama?) according to Mrs. Inchbald, is being rendered the more interesting to a London playgoer by a sudden revival of interest in the melodramatic tradition. There has been a long reign for that tradition at Collins's and the Elephant, but it is indeed strange to find the stout heart that beats beneath a frogged jacket now pulsating at the Oxford, where Mr. Cochran was wont to proliferate his exotic revues in the grand Babylonian manner. Now democracy may stare and sob where smartness was all. Stalls that were once priced at a guinea or more are available for a shilling or two. "The Lifeguardsman," after doing and suffering terrible things like the tragic hero of old, wins the Princess to slow music; which was a fate blessedly unknown to the martyrs of Hellas. Clouds that are as black as pitch are yet lined with silver that is Walter-Howard-marked. The thing moves along in a slow, processional way with the certainty of ritual and the fixity of faith. The Princess herself is at least as vacantly-minded as any champion sprout of innocence in Victorian fiction; the villain, Prince Hugo, is as obtuse as he is objectionable. The hero, Prince Max, is as handsome as he does.

Is there anywhere a history of sentimentality? If so, can it explain the strange alteration in common human taste that has been so strongly marked during the last century and a half? Violent drama has always been popular since drama began. The bloody deed and the severed head are as much in the Greek as in the Elizabethan tradition. But the sweet tooth of an audience is a new thing. Old melodrama may have been larger and harsher than life, or morbidly attracted by loss of life, but it was not false to life. By so concentrating upon death that the stage would be piled high with corpses it showed a certain pluck. What would the groundlings who accepted 'Titus Andronicus' as a masterpiece have thought of 'My Old Dutch,' which I saw last week at Collins's? For in this play the strong waters of melodrama have simply ebbed away into a sentimental morass. No doubt Albert Chevalier could do something with it by mixing songs with sobs. But it is the kind of piece that only genius can save, and then the discriminating playgoer will be furious that genius should waste its time upon such trifles. The blight of sweetness, to whose lure Mrs. Inchbald had been susceptible a hundred years before, had thoroughly eaten its way into the common mind when this sort of thing could get itself written. The point about modern melodrama, whether we see it at the play or on the screen, is not that it is terrible but that it is tender. Its heroic hearts are as big as footballs and as publicly displayed. Its maiden meditations have no more content and no less beauty than a glycerine tear. Its appropriate music is the dithering of fiddles, and its chief object of existence is to break the excellent rule laid down by Mr. Tappertit that "there are strings in the human heart that had better not be vibrated." Go up to Islington, take your bag of nuts to your eightpenny "fotile," and observe how the great heart of the people responds to the lure of "vibration." Virtue expiring in a workhouse ward is found to be worth all the murderous devices in stage-history. To observe and tremble has now become less fierce a pleasure of popular playgoing than to sit and snivel; my impression of the "movies" is the same. There seems to be matter for a treatise deep and wide on the lust for sweetness that came so late into the world and yet is so potent a conqueror.

## LITERARY COMPETITIONS—11

SET BY ROBERT LYND

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best answer, in not more than 200 words, to the question: If you had to be an animal instead of a human being, which animal would you prefer to be, and why?

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best Sonnet addressed either (1) To a Latchkey or (2) In Farewell to Oysters.

## RULES

The following rules must be observed by all competitors:

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 11a, or LITERARY 11b).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, May 10, 1926. The results will be announced in the issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW immediately following. The Editor very much regrets that neither he nor the setter of the Competitions can enter into any correspondence with competitors or others concerning the competitions or questions arising therefrom. Despite the fact that this notice is published every week, letters continue to reach us. These cannot be published or answered.

## RESULTS OF COMPETITION 9

(April 17, 1926)

SET BY GERALD BARRY

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best Rhymed Epitaph, in not more than eight lines, on either (a) an aged and respected poacher, or (b) a Jewish gentleman of the name of McTavish, who began his career with a barrow in the Old Kent Road and ended it as chief proprietor of an emporium in one of our smaller suburbs, with a country residence at Golder's Green.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best Dialogue between a Motorist and a Pedestrian concerning their respective modes of progression. Competitors may show as much bias in either direction as they like. Length must not exceed 300 words.

We have received the following report from Mr. Gerald Barry, with which we concur, and we therefore have pleasure in awarding the prizes in accordance with his recommendations.

## REPORT FROM MR. GERALD BARRY

9A. The number of entries for this competition was very large and the general level of merit was high. The poacher definitely proved more inspiring than McTavish: not only were twice as many epitaphs on the former as on the latter submitted, but they were, generally, on a higher plane of achievement, and the best very much better than anything anyone could find to say about poor Mr. McTavish. No one, by the way, made the point that McTavish was a poacher too. Some clever and amusing tributes were, however, paid to that illustrious gentleman's memory. "Janhope" deserves

to be quoted in full, though I should certainly not call his verse a good epitaph, or his second and third couplets good rhymes:

Earth to earth and moss for Moses;  
Pushing barrows—pushing roses.  
Pushing lines of summer sooting  
For the youth of Upper Tooting;  
Pushed from Golder's Green, via Kensall's,  
Whither's writ with flaming pencils:—  
"Hic (as long as Deus placet)  
The Great McTavish Fireproof Jac(k)et."

Mr. Michael Holland's last four lines are neater, and more subtle:

A Nose, by any other name,  
Links Palestine and Scotia's fame,  
And pipes that wail in Aberdeen  
Answer the harps of Golder's Green.

If his first four lines had had the point of these last he would certainly have been in the running for a prize. Several competitors are apparently in some doubt as to what an epitaph is, or should be: among these I definitely recommend the two ladies who submitted limericks for the first and second booby prizes respectively. "Rand's" parody is bright—too bright, I fear, for any tombstone—and this must be said of a large number of the entries. I will not support the Brighter Burial movement. But I respectfully salute "Rand" for his second line, and willingly accept his apologies for the rhyme:

HIC JACET BENLEDI MCTAVISH

My heart's in the Hielans, my body lies here,  
My heart's in the Hielans o' bonny Judea,  
A' chasing the Gentile and taking his dough,  
My hands in his pockets wherever I go.

"A. H. B.," whose address is in Sussex, seems to have a certain bias against the North:

Once pushed a truck and then set up a store,  
Then an emporium—Could a Scot do more?

—the subject seems to have gone to his head.

The poacher, on the other hand, evidently went straight to competitor's hearts—if competitors may be said to have hearts. The thought of the hoary old reprobate himself snared at last moved several to something not very unlike poetry. Unfortunately these particular efforts were not particularly good as epitaphs, and are too long to quote, so I must content myself with offering my congratulations to Katharine Parsons, Lester Ralph and Geoffrey Parratt, who know there is something to be said even for a poacher, and know, too, how to say it. The entries for this competition were so good, Mr. Editor, and those for Competition B so poor that I must reluctantly recommend that, if you are agreeable [We are—ED. S.R.], one of the prizes offered for B be transferred to A, there being at least three efforts worthy of a prize in the first and certainly not two in the second. I finally select for first prize Mr. H. C. Duffin, whose epitaph seems to me to be succinct, appropriate, and slightly sententious, in the best tombstone manner. In the same style, but less neat, is "Pibwob's":

Here lies, respected and regretted,  
The body of TOM PROUT,  
Who died as game as what he netted  
In copses here about.  
Since Poacher Death has snared him fast,  
He's had to pack his traps at last.

To set the three next best in order of precedence has been exceedingly difficult, and since, when there is little if anything in merit to choose between entries, personal preference must play some part in reaching a decision, I place myself in your hands, Sir, to confirm or reverse my choice as you think right. I choose for second prize, then, Mr. E. J. Bolus, whose last line, in particular, is excellent, and I recommend for an extra prize C. LL.-J., who has humour and a proper respect for tradition, though I do not like "mayn't have heard." "Pibwob" is runner-up and gains Honourable Mention along with "Chantecler," Lester Ralph, Geoffrey Parratt, Miss J. F. Blomfield, Michael Holland, and Katharine Parsons.



## THE WINNING ENTRY

## EPITAPH ON AN AGED AND RESPECTED POACHER

A thousand snares he set; but now, held fast  
In Death's grim trap, his brave wise heart grown colder,  
This ancient foe of keepers feels at last  
The Great Gamekeeper's hand upon his shoulder.

H. C. DUFFIN

## SECOND PRIZES

A super-poacher, here I'm laid;  
Long years have taught me well my trade;  
For spite of squire, and precept pious,  
A pheasant is a *res nullius*.  
Nor yet in heaven I take mine ease,  
But underneath celestial trees  
I toy with my familiar vice,  
And snare the birds of paradise.

E. J. BOLUS

Here lies Bill Blood, who, though he broke the Law,  
Upheld the laws of which some mayn't have heard.  
He died of grief at eighty when he saw  
A post-war landlord shoot a sitting bird.

C. LL.-J.

9b. As I have already hinted, the entries for this competition were sadly disappointing. Nobody rose to the occasion really satisfactorily, though the winning dialogue has its points. Many competitors relied too exclusively on the "God's-good-fresh-air" gambit, and others made their motorists say things in conversation like this, "In my car I can speed at will whithersoever I list." It is surprising, too, now that nearly everyone motors, to note how many people still talk about clouds of white dust on the roads. This is now a comparatively rare occurrence in England, thanks to tar. Most competitors were on the side of Shanks's mare. I recommend for the prize of a guinea "Tee Kay." "Puffin" began well with a good idea, but tailed off and gets Honourable Mention. So do Hugh E. Wright and, for his temerity in perpetrating the most flagrant and sustained series of puns I have ever seen, "Janhope."

## THE WINNING ENTRY

*Motorist (touring in Connaught):* Going far? Like a lift?

*Pedestrian (slightly scared by sudden sound of horn):* No offence, mister, and thanking you kindly, but shank's mare's good enough for me. And this road's for walking, like it was when Adam was a gossoon.<sup>1</sup> The like of that shiny yoke of yours, screeching and howling the same as the devil's painted chariot would be skimming the wind, is very well for them that wants its glow and its glitter, and its turn of speed to aqual<sup>2</sup> a hound. Forby<sup>3</sup> our feet carry us quick enough to the grave, anyway.

*Motorist:* Perhaps you're partly right. But I'd be a long time doing Connemara on foot.

*Pedestrian:* Aye, but what you'd see that way would be ating and drink for you, and you to be only skimming a sketch of the scenery when your mind would be on the dodging of donkeys and stray sheep.

*Motorist:* How far are you walking?

*Pedestrian:* Ten small mile. I'll do it in less than three hour.

*Motorist:* Oh, hop in, and I'll take you that far in a quarter of an hour.

*Pedestrian:* And me dead body to be found under your polished engine, maybe, at the cross of Meelick-bawn!

*Motorist:* Nonsense! I've been driving fifteen years and never hurt as much as a goose.

*Pedestrian:* Well, I'll risk it, just for the divilment.

<sup>1</sup> Small boy.<sup>2</sup> Equal.<sup>3</sup> Besides.<sup>4</sup> Easily.<sup>5</sup> Conceit.

*Motorist:* That's better. Wait, I'll open the door for you. Sit beside me. That's it . . . Better than walking?

*Pedestrian:* She starts conny<sup>4</sup> enough, and smooth's the road for going. . . Glory be! Look at the hedges and ditches racing to get behind us! . . . Hurrooh! . . . I thought we'd hit that bridge. . . Begor, I thought the cow was kilt! . . . Here, mister! Lave me down, now, before I'm out of consait<sup>5</sup> with the trudging!

"TEE KAY"

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters which are of reasonable brevity, and are signed with the writer's name, are more likely to be published than long and anonymous communications.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach us by the first post on Wednesday.

## THE PRICE OF MODERN PICTURES

SIR,—In reference to the letter of Frances L. Evans (published on February 13), respecting the prohibitive prices of modern pictures, and the following suggested application of art to practical and commercial uses by Miss A. Defries, the facts are admitted, and the problem is therefore one of meeting the conditions on commonsense lines.

The questions involved by the first point are: (1) The exorbitant percentage demanded by the dealer; (2) the cost of the production of pictures, which Mrs. Evans argues should be sold at anything from 10s. to £25. This involves: use of models, 10s. per day; cost of materials, framing and other incidental expenses, to say nothing of the time spent on their execution and the training necessitated; (3) the irregularity of sales and the inability of the artist to subsist on what often works out to be less than half the income of the dustman, although being an artist he or she is expected to retain sufficient enthusiasm to supply the public with inspiration. Unfortunately, in this country there is not the confraternity among artists and dealers that exists in Paris, where a dealer can be found willing to take a "sporting" chance with the artist and back what at the outset appears a forlorn hope. Here the artist is virtually forced to make his reputation before he is acceptable, which is one of the reasons why there is so much unrecognized talent on the walls of private studios. Moreover, in spite of Mrs. Evans, there are dozens of artists who, failing to find an out-sell their productions at desperation prices to friends reckless speculator in art (who realizes that in any case he has secured more than his cash value).

The most effective means of regulating prices systematically is (a) by Art itself becoming a recognized national institution with Government prestige, and (b) for the artists themselves to possess a union protecting their interests and offering means for establishing some intelligent and tangible relationship between the public and themselves. This union should advocate and institute: A minimum wage for all art work which should be categorized; sick pay, out of work benefit; the establishment of a maximum commission exacted on sales by dealers, control prices of galleries, etc. Government support could make possible the offer of certain rooms in existing public galleries for the specific purpose of affording younger artists an opportunity to exhibit. The danger of maladministration could be obviated as far as possible by the election of a committee embracing the varying phases and tendencies of art and studying their interests. Such an organization as the British Confederation of Art

Workers would be a suitable body to promote these ideas—it is an amalgamation of Societies with a central committee resembling a parliament.

The second point—that of the application of Art to industrial service—involves a distinction between "fine" art and "industrial" art. The suggestion by Miss Defries is that the artist earns his income by designing for industry, which should allow him time for producing a "great work of art, using the best materials." "Ancient art," she argues, "was not limited, why should modern art be so handicapped?" The points these remarks suggest is the artificiality of the distinction—which did not exist in the days of ancient art when Dürer, Holbein, Cellini, Verrochio and the great Leonardo employed their genius in practical service. (Did not the latter design costume, organize pageants, build bridges, make bombs and keep systematic accounts?) This distinction is due to two main facts of modern life: the commercial system, which has divorced this outlet for the natural employment of the artistic faculty from the hands of artists, and has led to a lower standard of taste; the gradually developing distaste for industrialism, stimulated by the direction of the artistic impulse into purely individualistic channels—specializations which are now called "fine art"; the consequent deficiency in the equipment of the artist, both in his mental attitude and practical capacity for tackling commercial problems or using opportunities.

That industry offers scope for good design is only too obvious when we look at our standardized park fountains; our domestic water taps, door knockers and handles; gas and electric fittings and cooking utensils; and when we note the uniform monotony produced under the name of commerce. On the other hand so-called artistic versions are expressive of misapplied superstructural ornamentation rather than dignified service, of which beauty and use are both essential and integral parts. Again the distaste of artists for industry lies in the canker of profit-making, which tends to produce the cheapest and shoddiest as a commercial proposition and foster the public taste for that constant change which is necessary for the upkeep of growing establishments. This tends to debase the aesthetic standard, to which debasement the artist himself frequently succumbs.

"The mode—that is the arbiter, with the public." It is with this truism in mind that the sincere artist must enter the industrial field, unafraid to "soil his hands and damage his susceptibilities," with the practical and honourable work which the "ancients" accepted as part of their natural heritage. It is the artist's task to enforce and raise the standard of appreciation. To this end, therefore, art and manual or technical training should be regarded as inseparable, and so presented in the industrial art courses of our public schools, constituting essential branches in the courses of study, having fundamental relationship. For culture lies not in these fine distinctions but rather in the understanding of those laws of beauty and harmony which can endow the humblest things in life with distinction and dignify their service.

I am, etc.,

GRACE E. ROGERS

#### THE MANURE QUESTION

SIR,—Under the umbrella of sciolism, Mr. Gray thinks he is quite safe to utter an illogical statement. Continually associating with gardeners and farmers, my experience shows that, without any argument at all, 75 per cent. would utilize "natural manures" such as dung or human refuse, etc., in preference to any form of artificial fertilization.

Mr. Gray's assertion regarding the Rothamsted experiment possesses the obvious rejoinder that, during the last eighty years, the production of British agriculture has decreased, and in consequence we import £400,000,000 to £500,000,000 of food-stuffs per annum

—and why? Because the finest "natural" manure in the country is being washed into the sea by our authorities, and science endeavours to depreciate the undoubted value of farmyard manure. My vocabulary possesses another blessed word besides "humus" and that is "symbiosis."

*Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*

I am, etc.,

"A MANCHESTER SEEDSMAN"

#### THE LIFE OF GLADSTONE

SIR,—Rarely indeed can one strike a slip in your ever careful columns. A very slight misstatement, however, there does seem to be in the article entitled, 'Where is the Reading Public?' in last week's number. The writer refers to "The Victorian days when the family sat down at night each with a volume of Morley's 'Life of Gladstone,' and found it all very exciting."

Wasn't Morley's monumental work published in the immediately succeeding Edwardian era? Apart from this trifling inaccuracy, probably mere oversight, I, for one, coincide most cordially in the sentiment expressed.

I am, etc.,

A. C. GRIEVE

15 The Willows, Breck Road, Liverpool

#### THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL

SIR,—I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly publish this letter, which I am writing in the hope that I may induce some of your readers to show practical sympathy with us in our effort to provide for the rebuilding of the Middlesex Hospital.

It is no light task to endeavour to raise the sum of at least five hundred thousand pounds, even though the need is patent and the desirability of retaining this hospital as a unit of the health services of the country is beyond question. The chief difficulty—and I state this very definitely—is the extreme apathy of the public and its failure adequately to realize that the request for this sum is not made solely in the interest of that class which uses the hospital for treatment purposes. The request is made to every member of the community, for the work of this hospital, as of others, is directly undertaken for their benefit. Progress in medical science means better health, increased efficiency, and a greater measure of happiness for all.

There is so much that remains to be done, so much that the Middlesex Hospital can do, if encouraged to develop its activities; but such encouragement should come from consciousness of its true value to the community as a whole, and not because of its charitable work for one section of it. If only those who are disposed to take a serious view of this problem would come and see me at the hospital, or allow me to come and see them, I am sure that I could convince them of the importance of the schemes which we are so anxious to carry out. Will some of your readers give me this opportunity?

I am, etc.,

WALTER KEWLEY,

House Governor

The Middlesex Hospital, W.1

The Toc H. Drama League are presenting Karel Capek's 'R.U.R.' at Cripplegate Theatre on Thursday and Friday, May 6 and 7. Special attention is being paid to the production and the actual Robot uniforms used in the original St. Martin's production are to be worn. The Toc H. orchestra will make its first public appearance at these performances and the proceeds go to a summer camp for working boys.

## A NUMBER OF THINGS

MR. ST. JOHN ERVINE becomes more and more outrageous in his attempts to persuade us to talk Ulster and call it English. There is only one standard of English: the speech of well-born and well-educated English people. Such people, though they may differ among themselves on certain points, agree in avoiding both provincialism and pedantry. On the one hand, they do not roll their "r's" or whistle when they pronounce "wh"; and on the other hand, they do not attempt to establish impossible distinctions between identical sounds because the words are differently spelt. Thus they infuriate both the provincial and the pedant. But they talk English. Mr. St. John Ervine says they talk Cockney. Now Cockney, whether crude or spuriously refined, is a perfectly definite dialect, and to lose the distinction between it and correct English is simply to encourage the spread of Cockney. Cannot Mr. St. John Ervine see that if he asserts that the Prince of Wales talks Cockney, thousands of people who do talk Cockney will be comforted by the belief that they are possessed of the Prince's English if not the King's, and will abandon all effort at improvement? His campaign, even apart from certain errors of taste and failures in tact, is mischievous because it is confusing.

I rejoice to be reminded by a passage in Mr. Baldwin's book that he reads Swift. My betters may hold that a politician should nourish him chiefly on history and political economy, but for my part I would urge every politician to the frequent reading of such of our prose writers as lived in a world tolerably like the modern and yet before sentiment was applied to politics by Rousseau—in a word, the writers of our eighteenth century. As a critic, of sorts, I am not prepared to be very enthusiastic over eighteenth-century prose; give me the best of the seventeenth century and the best of the nineteenth. But he who would correct himself in regard to the intellectual vices common among politicians can hardly do better than spend his leisure among the strong, cant-clear minds of the eighteenth. No one has ever very seriously wanted my vote, but the candidate who is steeped in Swift and Johnson can count on it, for I know that his very mistakes will be of a kind desirable in the political life of to-day.

Chronologically the 'nineties are not remote from us, but since typical figures of the period made a point of dying prematurely, links with the 'nineties are not very numerous. One such is snapped by the death of Mr. Joseph Pennell. His lithographs and etchings were worthy of attention, which was not denied them; but he counted most of all as a man who, aided by his wife, gathered round him so many of the choice spirits of his day. To his rooms in the Adelphi came Whistler, Aubrey Beardsley, Henley, helped up the stairs by colleagues on the *National Observer*, and a host of others who mattered then and matter still. Mrs. Pennell collected cookery books, but it could not be said of her, in Wilde's words of another, that she set out to found a *salon* and ended by keeping a free restaurant. Those rooms in the Adelphi were a *salon*, without pretension. R. A. M., the more brilliant though the less achieving of the two Stevensons, would be there, and Mr. Sickert, and Mr. George Moore, and all the stars would twinkle together amicably, except that a certain American artist had to be hidden if Whistler came in. Alas! there is no conversation that does not end in the great silence, with but little of it recorded.

We know what Carlyle made out of one passage of "legal intelligence" and Matthew Arnold out of another. There is no one now capable of exposing all that is implied in the evidence of a defendant at Kingston, who said that, having been medically advised to seek a change of air, he went to Bournemouth. To do what? To continue his original occupation. And what was that? Well, he worked at sewage disposal. There, surely, you have a great deal of what progress has done for us, making it possible for a man to get rapidly, safely and fairly sharply from the sewer near London to the sewer at Bournemouth or from the sewer at Liverpool to the sewer at Llandudno. With enterprise, he might very well make the grand tour of all the sewers of England, and return from his change of air broadened by such travel. A modern ideal, of which Mr. James Joyce really must take note for another 'Ulysses.'

The birds, misled by the brilliant weather at Easter, are building prematurely this year; at least, some of them are. I wish I could have found some way of warning two pairs, of very different species, that I lately found very busy in Kensington Gardens; but birds are among the few creatures, newspaper proprietors being the others, to whom it is quite useless for a journalist to give advice. Now both nests are sodden, and the final decorations are postponed, and the two pairs of tenants, whenever I see them, are engaged in domestic debate, and really I cannot stand this condition of affairs. There is coal, there is the Budget, and there is the general European situation, and to all these grave matters I react. But there are two pairs of birds in Kensington Gardens with wet half-built nests, and at present I am more worried about them than about anything else.

If Tennyson's Duke of Wellington ode had to be adapted to apply to me, and that might be quite a good competition for the SATURDAY to set, I am afraid a famous line of it would have to be altered to "who never made a single run." Nevertheless, in the consulship of Plaucus, I played cricket, and I respect the game. But I do humbly suggest that the beginning of the season need not be celebrated by great discourses on the moral value of the game. Skill at it does not really guarantee anything. A man may score and score and be a villain. It is a very good game, giving pleasure to hosts of people; why not take it simply as a game, without pretending that it is to be cherished mainly because it is the highest form of moral training yet discovered? Surely, it is slighting the game to profess that it is to be played for an ulterior object.

Following unconsciously the example of Charles Lamb's friend, Burney, Mr. Beck has summed up Shakespeare, in his recent speech at Stratford, as "always a gentleman." Well, there are a couple of things in each of two plays that might conceivably be used to controvert that view of him, though in the main it is perfectly justified. But here is Lord Sydenham writing, not to oppose it, rather to accept it and to use it in favour of the non-Shakespearean authorship of the plays. Was Bacon so very completely a gentleman in the moral sense? It is to be feared not. Wanted, an Elizabethan gentleman with the wit to write the plays and the folly to conceal his authorship. Yet, why a male gentleman, of necessity, seeing that morally a great many women have been gentlemen? And I will here admit that in my opinion the plays were written by the Dark Lady, who naturally kept her authorship dark—a thing nobody else would have had any motive for doing.

TALLYMAN



## NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE

Notice under this heading does not preclude or prejudice subsequent review.

BY a chance of which we are far from complaining, our shelves are this week crowded with books on art, every one of them in some degree creditable to English publishing. First, we have three volumes in the admirably produced series for which Messrs. Benn, whose good taste and persistent enterprise deserves cordial recognition, are issuing: 'Drawings of the Early German Schools,' edited by Mr. K. T. Parker; 'Florentine Drawings of the Quattrocento,' edited by Mr. H. S. Ede; 'Flemish Drawings of the Seventeenth Century,' edited by Mr. T. W. Muchall-Viebrook, of the Munich Print Room (Benn, 18s. net each). The reproductions are in each case numerous and excellent, and there are bibliographical and other aids to further study of the drawings of these schools.

'Alphonse Legros' (*Studio*, 5s. net) gives us a number of that artist's characteristic etchings, with an introduction by Mr. Malcolm C. Salaman. He leads off with 'Le Chat Noir,' the best of the etchings done by Legros, at the instance of Baudelaire, in illustration of Poe. That is a very natural thing to do, but it does suggest that Legros was a master from the first.

'A Dictionary of Painters of Miniatures' (Allan, 21s. net), by the late Mr. J. J. Foster, covers the period 1525-1850, and appears, though we have not had time to test it in more than a few places, to be as full as a work of its moderate size could be.

'Wickets and Goals' (Chapman and Hall, 15s. net), by Mr. J. A. H. Catton, revives the most famous figures and events in the modern history of cricket and in the history of Association football in a popular fashion, with illustrations from photographs.

'The Contemporary Theatre, 1925' (Chapman and Hall, 7s. 6d. net) has two strong claims on our attention: it is by Mr. James Agate, and it has an introduction by Mr. C. E. Montague, who rightly finds zest, a faculty for rejoicing over fine acting, to be Mr. Agate's distinguishing merit. He might have quoted against some dramatic critics of to-day what Carlyle hurled against the dramatists of that day, "What I object to in our damnable dramatists is: that they have in them no *thing*, no event or character, that looks musical and glorious to them."

'Satirical Poems' (Heinemann, 3s. 6d. net) gives us a collection of the work in this vein done in the last seven years by Mr. Siegfried Sassoon.

'A Dictionary of Modern English Usage' (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 7s. 6d. net) completes, for the present, the valuable and amusing work done by Mr. H. W. Fowler in the correction of those who take liberties with the King's English.

It is, apparently, less as a critic in the strict sense than as an informed and sympathetic writer of summaries that Mr. Richard Aldington has produced 'French Studies and Reviews' (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d. net). Here, for example, would seem to be what the average intelligent reader wishes to know about Villon, Scarron and other older and more modern French writers. But Mr. Aldington can exhibit independence of the requirements of the average reader: here is an essay on *Restif de la Bretonne*.

'Ricasoli and the Risorgimento in Tuscany' (Faber and Gwyer, 16s. net), by Mr. W. K. Hancock, is a serious attempt to fill a gap in the history of the movement by a full and well documented study of a leader whose Puritanical temper made him, Mr. Hancock thinks, "a dictator and diplomatist of a type which Europe had scarcely known since the days of Cromwell."

'Bach, Cantata Texts' (Constable, 3 guineas) is a reconstruction of the Leipzig Liturgy of his period by Dr. Charles Sanford Terry, a monumental work of musical scholarship.

## REVIEWS

## MR. LAWRENCE'S PHILOSOPHY

BY EDWARD SHANKS

*David.* By D. H. Lawrence. Secker. 15s. net.

MR. D. H. LAWRENCE is one of the most difficult problems among the writers of our time. His beginnings were electric. There was a promise in 'The White Peacock' and in 'Sons and Lovers' and in his early poems of a strange new beauty and power. Then came the unfortunate episode in which, after a police-court prosecution, 'The Rainbow,' which almost certainly would not suffer the same fate if it were published to-day, was suppressed. That book already had upon it signs of unintelligibility. After its suppression Mr. Lawrence wrote no other novel for some years, which, when he returned to the craft, seemed to have been devoted to the evolution of a philosophy of his own. What this philosophy is I do not know, nor have I met anyone who does. Mr. Lawrence has devoted several books to the exposition of it, without making it any more lucid, at any rate to me. I have read 'Women in Love' and 'Aaron's Rod' and lastly 'The Plumed Serpent,' as well as other writings, without coming any closer to an appreciation of its fundamentals. The last of these books contains a sketch of a new religion which only makes the darkness more profound. It is impossible to make much of passages like this:

That is the symbol of Quetzalcoatl, the Morning Star. Remember the marriage is the meeting-ground, and the meeting-ground is the star. If there be no star, no meeting-ground, no true coming together of man with the woman, into a wholeness, there is no marriage. And if there is no marriage, there is nothing but an agitation. If there is no honourable meeting of man with woman and woman with man, there is no good thing come to pass. But if the meeting come to pass, then who-soever betrays the abiding place, which is the meeting-ground, which is that which lives like a star between day and night, between the dark of woman and the dawn of man, between man's night and woman's morning, shall never be forgiven, neither here nor in the hereafter. For man is frail and woman is frail, and none can draw the line down which another shall walk. But the star that is between two people and is their meeting-ground shall not be betrayed.

But it is equally impossible to dismiss this obscure text as merely verbose balderdash. Mr. Lawrence is sincere and is strenuous in sincere thinking. Moreover, where one can follow him, he is evidently a man of genius. His passages of description are brilliant in their depth and vividness. The emotions of his persons communicate themselves even to a reader who cannot make out what has caused them.

His latest work, the 'David,' cited at the head of this page, suggests a tentative answer to the problem thus put before us. It is a play, in sixteen scenes, probably not suited to the stage, but throughout moving and, above all, perfectly lucid. It tells, very simply, after following the Biblical language very closely, the story of Saul's supplanting by David, and something of its character may be discerned in the speech by Jonathan, with which it closes:

JONATHAN (*alone in the twilight*): Thou goest, David! And the hope of Israel with thee! I remain, with my father, and the star-stone falling to despair. Yet what is it to me? I would not see thy new day, David. For thy wisdom is the wisdom of the subtle, and behind thy passion lies prudence. And naked thou wilt not go into the fire. Yea, go thou forth, and let me die. For thy virtue is in thy wit and in thy shrewdness. But in Saul have I known the magnanimity of a man. Yea, thou art a smiter down of giants, with a smart stone! Great men and magnanimous, men of the faceless flame, shall fall from Strength, fall before thee, thou David, shrewd whelp of the lion of Judah! Yet my heart yearns hot over thee, as over a tender, quick child. And the heart of my father yearns, even amid its dark wrath. But thou goest forth, and knowest no depth of yearning, thou son of Jesse. Yet go! for my twilight is more to me than thy day, and my death is dearer to me than thy life. Take it! Take thou the kingdom and the days to come. In the flames of death where Strength is, I will wait and

watch till the day of David shall at last be finished, and wisdom no more be fox-faced, and the blood gets back its flame. Yea, the flame died not, though the sun's red dies! And I must get me to the city.

This is a view of human life, cast in poetic form, at once impassioned and comprehensible. The fire in the heart of David is that of ambition and wisdom, the fire in the heart of Saul is that of devotion, and the play exhibits a struggle between these two fundamentally opposed forces. It is also a picture, and a wonderfully vivid one, of the supplanting of a great man by a younger rival. Saul sees in David his destined successor, just as the mournful Titan sees Apollo in 'Hyperion,' sees the power to which he must yield, knows that he must, and cannot quite understand why. David reveres Saul and would be at peace with him, but the fire in his heart drives him on. Samuel offers him peace, if he will abandon his claim to be king, and when he replies at last, "The Lord shall do unto me as He will," there is an immense wealth of meaning in his words.

This beautiful play is certainly one of the most nearly perfect of Mr. Lawrence's productions. I cannot help thinking that verse, or some approach to it (perhaps in the manner of M. Paul Claudel), would have added to its beauty. Indeed the piece makes a good instance in support of those who, like myself, believe that, while prose is capable of the highest poetic elevation, yet verse is more likely to reach it and much more capable of sustaining it. But with regard to Mr. Lawrence's work as a whole the moral of 'David' is that he writes better the more closely he is restricted to image, action and description, the less liberty he has to express his philosophy directly. Where he has no such restriction, as in deliberately philosophical essays, he becomes almost wholly unintelligible. In the novel the mere machinery of the story brings his better talent sometimes forward. But in the play his bad angel of obscure discourse is almost entirely exorcised. It is not unreasonable to suppose that if he gave more of his attention to compositions in the dramatic form, his genius would more readily and obviously assert itself. He is one of those writers who should allow their view of life to emerge implicitly in image and action. Thus, as here, it conveys itself to the reader. When he expounds it in set terms, he darkens counsel. He not only injures his work and stultifies his own genius, he even makes it more difficult for the reader to understand what he actually wishes to say.

#### PHILOSOPHER AND PRIG

*The Life of William Godwin.* By Ford K. Brown. Dent. 16s. net.

WORKING with admirable patience and industry, Mr. Brown has made an engaging book about a dull philosopher who was once an influence and had friends much brighter than himself. Probably Mr. Brown knew that other people's opinions about Godwin were more interesting than Godwin himself, an unconscious humorist, if there ever was one. The believer in "perfectibility" who caught and bled Shelley of several thousands, the practiser of "Perfect Sincerity" who wrote endless letters and forgave his friends with annoying complacency was both tedious and dangerous. How could a woman admire or endure him? Yet after neglecting the chance suggested by his sister of a bride who had "about as much religion as my William likes," he made a long series of attempts to secure a handsome, as well as philosophic, mate, and finally married twice, going to the church his principles would not allow. It is clear that the second Mrs. Godwin was rather a trial, but the first—Mary Wollstonecraft—was much too good for him. He was a bad prig. His inhuman complacency would have vexed a saint, and it was only after the publication of his 'Political Justice' that he paid some regard to

personal affection as important in life. Mr. Brown says all he can for him, quoting letters which show that he was in his humourless way anxious to interest his children. For all his profession of pure reason he was very accessible to flattery; but he did ply an important pen, when the trial of his friends for sedition came on; and he doubtless suffered much, when Jacobinism went out, and he became a nonentity in the world of thought. But he was extravagant and not straight in money matters, and always put a heavy strain on the generosity of friends. His dealings, alike with the eminently sensible Francis Place and the wild Shelley, reveal the impossibility of his behaviour, and he was capable of describing the latter, his main support at the time, as a "disgraceful and flagrant person." His friend Holcroft with much less education was twice as good a man. Lamb tolerated him sweetly, and Coleridge got over the early and obvious reflection that atheism did not prejudice him against Godwin, but Godwin against atheism. Hazlitt found him "naturally dull," and the dullness lies thick over all his pompous epistles. "I ought," he writes, "to be acquainted with my defects, and to trace their nature in the effects they produce." He might have traced them in a family suicide, but he did not. His strange insensibility to the feelings of others was part, we suppose, of his abominable self-satisfaction. He was thoroughly convinced of his own integrity. We cannot think with Mr. Brown that he was unusually ill-treated. People did well with their books in those days. Godwin started with 700 guineas for the copyright of 'Political Justice,' and got £400 for his wordy 'Life of Chaucer.' He ended with a small Government place, and may be considered lucky, till we reflect that Mathias of 'The Pursuits of Literature' was pensioned. He survives now only in 'Caleb Williams,' a book of real power which might be regarded as the beginning of the detective story, and in the accounts of brilliant friends like Lamb and Hazlitt.

Why does Mr. Brown use the word "loan" as a verb? It is a needless weed, since "lend" exists. His mention of the Laureateship in 1813 suggests that Walter Scott and Southey were rivals for the place. There was no "struggle" for it. Scott was asked first, and only thought of it for a while. One of his several reasons for refusing was that Southey needed help more than he did. "Blake, whom Gilchrist says 'got on ill' with Godwin and liked him worse," is very awkward, if not bad grammar. Usually Mr. Brown writes effectively, though in rather a full, periphrastic style, and his knowledge of the varied literature of the period is extensive.

#### THE INNS OF ENGLAND

*The English Inn, Past and Present.* By A. E. Richardson and H. D. Eberlein. Batsford. 25s. net.

THE revival of intelligent interest in English inns, to which this book will render valuable assistance, is of more recent date than may generally be supposed, but the most devoted worker in this cause has already been forgotten. Edwin Edwards, President of the Hogarth Club, died in 1880, his labour of love uncompleted, but leaving a large number of excellent etchings and drawings of the inns to visit which he had ranged all over the country, and leaving also some few disciples. In 1871 he could still record that certain of the county families of Norfolk were gallantly persistent in coaching to London, with benefit to inns on their route. But, as is shown by a very entertaining excerpt which Mr. Richardson and Mr. Eberlein give from the correspondence of a lady who startled the public by coaching from Chippenham to London in 1844, the old mode of travel had elsewhere been contemptuously aban-



done nearly a generation earlier, even by people with means, leisure and conservative leanings. In the 'eighties, the inns of England, with a few exceptions, were suffering from thirty years of neglect by customers who would expect comfort and could pay for it. Antiquaries, artists and lovers of the curious might give them some attention; but they fastened on incidentals and irrelevancies and mere quaintnesses. It was a great saying of Thackeray's about wine that it should be "winey." When Edwards did his excellent work, he was almost alone in demanding that an inn should be inn-like. We are nearly all wiser now; and the motor, developing only just in time to save the inns of England, has restored a measure of prosperity to those which are situated on certain of the roads.

The authors of the book before us have been at great pains to inspect inns in many parts of the country, and they have provided perhaps more detailed historical information than any of their predecessors. Indeed, if it were not for their occasional collapse into that irritating method whereby an old building is fancifully peopled with its possible visitors of a century or two ago, we should have little but praise for their part in the book. But its main attraction is in the illustrative matter. Surely never was there brought together such a wealth of evidence testifying to the aesthetic commonsense and sound craftsmanship of the builders and furnishers of the old inns of England. To what a height some of those builders would rise may be seen in the truly noble entrance to the "Lygon Arms," Broadway, which dates from the early years of the seventeenth century; but what we have in mind chiefly is success, achieved over and over again, in much more modest enterprises, in the simple business of producing a small or medium-sized building which, looking like an inn and affording the conveniences of one, should have charm, of however homely a kind. Those who will may prefer the very oldest inns, and to name but one, justly valued by the authors, "The Angel," Grantham, is a thing over which to rejoice. But, on the whole, we lean to the belief that it is in the eighteenth-century inns that the ideal was most nearly attained; and the inns of that period are the more fortunate in that the fittings, the settles and tables and chairs, can be so happily in harmony with the rooms.

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Eberlein touch, naturally, on the signs and the often odd naming of inns. Here, though they are judicious in selection of signs, they seem too willing to credit certain popularly accepted derivations of names. Is it quite certain that the "Bull and Mouth," which was on the site of the Post Office, took its name from Boulogne Mouth? The great frequency with which Bull occurs we have always supposed to be due to the fact that many of the oldest inns had their licence from ecclesiastical authorities, a fact of which, in this relation, the authors seem to make no mention; and we suspect that some curious conjunctions of names may have resulted from amalgamation or a landlord's desire to preserve his association with a former house. Inn cards, hitherto neglected, are very properly noticed by the authors, who give one, of the "Ram," Cirencester, done by Hogarth and re-engraved for the same house a century later. They might have paid more attention to the wines sold at various periods by the inns. It is to a seventeenth-century poetaster's difficulty in finding the then over-taxed wines of France that we owe a valuable list of the taverns and inns of London visited by him in a vain "Search for Claret." But they take some note of prices, and have a very agreeable extract from the reminiscences of a Dutch traveller who, in the eighteenth century, was made happy at the "White Hart," Harwich, for 26s. a day, which he thought very reasonable. Considering the purchasing power of money at that time, it is plain that the "White Hart" was not an establishment for visitors with light purses.

## MORE FUGGER LETTERS

*The Fugger News-Letters.* Second Series. Edited by Victor von Klarwill. Translated by L. S. R. Byrne. With illustrations. The Bodley Head. 18s. net.

THIS series, unlike the first, consists, we learn, of hitherto unpublished material. Count Philip Fugger, the great banker, certainly left a remarkable set of papers which found their way to the Vienna State Library, and the illustrations, also from Viennese sources, are often fine and always interesting. They include several famous Englishmen. England is clearly revealed as the dominant power to which Europe looked with hope or dread. The volume was originally to have been called 'This Queen'; so great are the power and influence—not to say the successful intrigue—of Elizabeth. Here she is defying both Pope and Philip II, playing with Alençon as a possible husband, or, one report says, going to marry her daughter to him! The banker's information produces the contemporary inventions which outstrip history as well as reasonable fears and prudent anticipations, and would be invaluable to a novelist. The Armada leads to a great deal of rumour, including an account at Rome and Prague of victory over the English. In 1580 Drake is reported as having stolen "two millions in cash in India, which belongs to the King of Spain." The "English pirate" often figures as getting clear away and hitting Spanish trade hard. In 1592 the King of Spain's losses at sea are put at four millions. The "English Lord Sidney" had enough fame for his death at Zutphen to be mentioned. From the Continental point of view the English were, indeed, a perpetual nuisance with their daring and impudence. At Antwerp they were bold enough to kidnap an Abbot and would not let him go until they were threatened with warships by the Prince of Orange. Their explanation was admirable:

In excuse they alleged that they had only taken him on to their ships because, during the fortnight which they had spent without cessation on board, they had been given nothing but butter, cheese and bad beer. They wanted the Abbot to try their rations and out of compassion give them something better. After the Abbot was liberated he drove in the Prince's coach back to the monastery and is somewhat indisposed from the shock.

The incident reads like a page from the Waverley novels.

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## PRINTS

*How to Distinguish Prints.* By Hesketh Hubbard. The Print Society. 21s. net.

TO those who wish to acquire knowledge of the various processes by which prints and book illustrations are produced Mr. Hesketh Hubbard's book will be of considerable interest. The section dealing with sixteen of the most commonly used methods of relief, intaglio and lithographic printing is accurately and clearly written; the artists responsible for this portion of the work have made plates and blocks specially for this publication, the prints from which act as useful illustrations to enable the reader to understand their descriptions of the various processes; to make matters still more clear microphotographs of details from these plates and prints are given. This portion of the book is excellently carried out.

It cannot be said, however, that the historical note is written with equal care and accuracy, and tradition is too often accepted as proved fact. For instance, the definite statements that Abraham Blooteling invented the rocking tool, and that Sherwin "used a half-round file to lay his mezzotint ground," are to be deprecated, as, though possibly correct, they rest on very weak evidence. To take another instance, we are told that "a goldsmith and map engraver of Haarlem, Jan van de Velde (fl. 1623-af. 1642) used some sort of spirit ground aquatint in conjunction with line engraving about 1642." We presume reference is made to the Oliver Cromwell print signed "Velde sculp."; but all good authorities from Nagler to Professor Hind have been very wary as to committing themselves on the question of authorship, date, and even method of this puzzling print. The whole subject of the early use of aquatint is one which still requires a great deal of research, and in writing about it, as in the case of all historical work, the greatest care should be taken not to make statements which cannot be proved up to the hilt.

Other sections of the book include brief but useful bibliographies, a glossarial index, and a short list of French and German equivalents of English technical terms used in connexion with prints. In this list the translations are often too literal; for example, a French writer alluding to a "register mark" would write "point de repère" and not "marque de registre." The book is well got up and on the whole is a useful work of reference.

## LATITUDINARIANISM

*The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought.* By W. R. Inge. Longmans. 4s. net.

IN this little volume of 120 pages Dean Inge gives us the Hulsean Lectures of 1925-26 at Cambridge. They are a plea for the recognition of a distinct and continuous spirit in the English Church, in harmony with the genius of the nation, neither Romanist nor Protestant in the sense of these two parties in the Church, but holding to a spiritual tradition which has its roots in Hellenism. Of the four chapters the first gives an amazingly good history of Christianity up to the Renaissance; the second traces the history of Christian Platonism in England, with especial reference to the Cambridge Platonists; the third, in spite of natural misgivings, treats of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley as spiritual guides; the fourth brings the history of Platonism in England up to our own time. All this is done with a wealth of extracts and the felicity of phrase we have always found in Dean Inge at his best, and we owe him especial thanks for sending us back to the Aphorisms of Whichcote and the sermons of John Smith, two of the leaders in the struggle "for an autonomous spiritual life, independent of the two infallibilities which were then contending against each other, and are both now dead or dying."

## NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

*Verity Thurston.* By Walter Raymond. Faber and Gwyer. 7s. 6d. net.

*Payment Deferred.* By C. S. Forrester. The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d. net.

*The Best Short Stories of 1925—American.* Cape 7s. 6d. net.

A MAN thinks twice before committing a deliberate murder, but a novelist will often introduce a deed of violence into his story with far less forethought. This is a mistake, for murder is as indigestible in fiction as it is in life. It is a fact to which all other facts must bow. However artfully arranged and plausibly invented, the train of facts which leads up to a murder can never be more than a pedestal to the crime itself. Like the shallow flight of steps at the base of a monumental column, these events serve to emphasize rather than to diminish the stupendous effect of the accomplished crime. Directly the crime is committed all sense of proportion is lost; the murderer almost ceases to be counted as a man: his past life has no significance beyond the fact that it is a murderer's. The murder's the thing; the element of sensationalism in it will not permit itself to be assimilated into the sequence of cause and effect upon which most novels are based. The casual killing which flourishes in historical romances and adventure stories is another matter: the book has been put into a state of war, martial law is the rule, and deaths are to be expected. Two murders are more convincing than one, three scarcely startle us at all, and four make a war, in which there are casualties but no murders. The solitary crime is the rock on which the novelist is likely to go to pieces; the solitary crime from which the "murder story," as such, has sprung. Realizing the difficulty of making murder a feature of every-day life, realizing too its enormous attraction as a sensation, novelists have thrown psychology to the winds and concentrated their efforts upon the act of violence itself. Thus treated, murder becomes the novelist's *passe-partout*: it can do everything for him. Whether it occurs at the beginning of the book or the end, its lurid light irradiates the pages and gives an intense if factitious importance to such prosaic details as the times of trains, the position of the pantry window, the geological strata of the district. Whatever is most boring in ordinary conversation and in books about ordinary life becomes suddenly a matter of compelling interest. And simply because it has to do with a murder. But try to make a character convincing, a fact important, because a murder has something to do with it! This is a very different enterprise.

Mr. Walter Raymond undertakes it in 'Verity Thurston,' a Wessex novel of the Napoleonic era, well-written, garnished with rustics and something of the peculiar quality of humour Mr. Hardy has taught us to expect from them. The heroine falls in love with a smuggler, Jack Merman. He is of foreign extraction, and though well off Verity's parents do not want her to marry him. But she is fascinated by precisely those qualities which made her elders suspect him—his rapidity of thought and action, the dare-devil in him. To please her and propitiate them he buys a farm and severs, nominally, his connexion with his disreputable way of life. But he has an ungovernable temper. One day, before their marriage, he strangles before her eyes an old dog to which she was much attached, and which had tried to bite him. The scene is excellently described; one trembles for Verity and wishes to warn her: but horrible as it is the murder of the dog is not a convincing preparation for the climax of the book, where violence is the order of the day. Mr. Raymond

scarcely alters his *tempo* while he narrates these grim happenings: the account is admirably restrained. But had he risked being a little ridiculous, lifted his voice after the manner of Dostoevski, railed against the world, put down the loud pedal and worked himself up into a frenzy, the conclusion would have seemed more part and parcel of the book than it does. As it stands, it is too arbitrary to be moving. Anyone may fall a victim to sudden death, anyone may be killed by a man with natural tendency to homicide. The conclusion of 'Verity Thurston' does not so much crown the story as put the lid on it. We can follow the lives of the characters up to the last point: then all becomes dark, and the projection of the story beyond its actual end, the conclusion of the pattern worked out by the mind, is forfeited.

The interest of 'Payment Deferred' also centres round a murderer, and a murder that intrudes itself into every-day life. But Mr. Forrester has so carefully prepared his atmosphere that, as in a nightmare, we are always expecting something disagreeable to happen. A threat lurks in the cadence of his prose; the air breathed by the occupants of 53 Malcolm Road, Dulwich, has a bad smell; it is the air of a mortuary. Deliberately Mr. Forrester has chosen to see meanness and ugliness in everything that he describes: the book seems to spell murder, each chapter is like a letter of that word. So forcibly does he convey the nastiness and uncertainty of life that to step out of it seems easy. Quite early Mr. Marble murders his charming nephew and buries the body in the garden. Then he makes a fortune by taking advantage of the rise of the franc; he keeps a mistress, fills his house with hideous Empire furniture, sends his son and daughter to expensive schools. He had a taste for display; but why he chose to benefit anyone but himself by it Mr. Forrester does not explain. He cleverly distributes throughout the book small doses of improbability, so that the mind becomes hardened to it and is prepared to swallow anything. Mr. Forrester takes pains, also, to make his hero psychologically credible. Mr. Marble is fury-ridden; he dare not leave his squalid little house in case the new tenant should find what is hidden in the garden. Flaws and starts, impostors to true fear, beset him all day long, and he drinks heavily. It would, perhaps, have been better to leave this particular stone unturned; for the evidence Mr. Forrester brings forward to prove his hero human obscures that other image of him, as a monster of depravity, which the imagination, hungry for romance, has been fashioning for itself. 'Payment Deferred' is more successful as a Grand Guignol shocker than as a study in the psychology of crime, more successful when it challenges the imagination than when it pays court to the reason.

A certain dreariness marks some of 'The Best American Short Stories of 1925.' There are no failures, there is little evidence of weakness or incompetence; but, with a few exceptions, observation is cultivated at the expense of imagination. We have no quarrel with facts, even facts about dry goods stores; but we come to long for a story with as little setting to it as possible. Whether or not the surface of American life changes too rapidly for writers to obtain a full imaginative conception of it we do not know; but many otherwise excellent pieces in this anthology fail to achieve distinction because the authors plunge headlong into minute description. They describe very well, but they describe everything; and as the objects described are plain, useful and ugly, there ultimately arises an effect of monotony, as though a landscape were studded with greater and lesser flat-irons. There are good stories by Sandra Alexander, Charles Caldwell Dobie, Elinor Wylie, and Kathleen Fullerton Gerould; but the gem of the collection is undoubtedly Miss Evelyn Scott's profound and sympathetic study, 'The Old Lady,' which might find a place in a collection of the best short stories not of one but of many years.



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## THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

CONTENTS—MAY, 1926

AFTER GENEVA. By "Augur"  
THE MODEL MANDATE. By A. Ryan  
FROM VERSAILLES TO GENEVA. By John Bell  
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW SELF-REVEALED. Part II. By Archibald Henderson  
ON GOVERNMENT PATRONAGE OF THE FINE ARTS. By Lionel Cust, Litt.D., C.V.O.  
JOHNSON, GIBBON & BOSWELL. By the Hon. Sir Charles Russell, Bart.  
BRAZIL AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. By Dudley Heathcote  
BUDAPEST. By G. B. Stern  
ARE WE LOSING FAITH IN SEA POWER? By Archibald Hurd  
IMPORTED REVOLUTION. By G. M. Godden  
INDIAN SWARAJ AND THE NATIVE STATES. By Stanley Rice  
POLITICAL PARTIES IN EGYPT. By Viator Hibernicus  
CHILDREN OF THE MORNING, CHAPTERS I. AND II. By W. L. George

LONDON: CHAFMAN & HALL, LTD.

## SHORTER NOTICES

**The Evolution of Parliament.** By A. F. Pollard. Longmans. 16s. net.

THIS book has taken its due place among the great text books of English Constitutional History at the side of Stubbs and Maitland. It has brought to a focus the results of half-a-century's studies, and has successfully traced the evolution of Parliament from the King's Council, the last remains of which were destroyed by a reforming Lord Chancellor who directed that the writs of summons to the Privy Council should no longer be issued. There is very little changed in this edition, but a new plan of the Palace of Westminster has been added, together with some notes elucidating points raised by critics of the first edition. There is a slight slip in the note on the *Modus* (p. 433). The copy under Great Seal of Ireland was not sent by Henry V to Ireland, but was an exemplification of an entry on the Patent Rolls of Ireland of a copy of the *Modus* found in the possession of Christopher Preston when he was arrested at Slane. The difference between Parliaments and Great Councils seems to have been fairly well established from Edward III to Charles I; the representatives of the Commons were not elected but selected or taken at random, and the records were entered in the Privy Council books, or (sometimes) on the back of Parliament Rolls.

**Constantinople.** By George Young. Methuen. 12s. 6d. net.

MR. YOUNG has felt and can communicate the spell of what he calls "the Circe of cities." He has utilized his spare hours at the Embassy for the pleasure of many readers, who will take delight in his historical and topographical divagations. He has mastered the art of being serious without being heavy. His pages are enlivened by many flashes of wit and droll descriptions, such as that charming one of the Turkish fire-engine. He is perhaps most eloquent in his account of St. Sophia and in his journey round the romantic walls which have heard the drums and trampling of so many conquests. There are twelve excellent illustrations from photographs and an admirable map of the Byzantine city.

**The Bolshevik Myth.** By Alexander Berkman. Hutchinson. 18s. net.

THE author of the diary printed in this interesting volume is an American anarchist, who spent in prison sixteen of the thirty years during which he "rooted" himself in the soil of the United States. It may therefore be presumed that he has no very strong prejudices in favour of the capitalistic form of society. When he was deported at the end of 1919 he looked forward with joy to seeing the Russian Revolution with his own eyes, to aiding "the great people that are transforming the world." Less than two years later he shook off the dust from his feet and left Russia in despair. "The slogans of the Revolution are foresworn, its ideals stifled in the blood of the people. . . . Dictatorship is trampling the masses under foot. . . . The Bolshevik myth must be destroyed." The publication of the diary which he kept at great risk and rescued with difficulty should go far to achieve this purpose. It strikes the reader as a perfectly genuine document, though of course it contains much that is only hearsay as well as personal experience.

**The Modern Ibsen.** By Hermann J. Weigand. Dent. 15s. net.

IT is difficult to discover sufficient justification for this bulky reconsideration of a familiar subject. Shaw's 'Quintessence' has covered the ground with such brevity and brilliance that only the omnivorous Ibsenite needs more than that wonderful essay and the texts of the plays themselves. Mr. Weigand plods conscientiously through his subject, beginning at 'The Pillars of Society.' He analyses each play in turn and draws conclusions which prove him to be a keen Ibsenite, but hardly one of those inspired critics whose freshness of outlook and infectious vigour of style really add to the subject on which they are passing comment. By relating passages in Ibsen's work and referring to incidents in the dramatist's life, the author is able to reach conclusions that are challenging to some of our preconceptions. But much of his writing is ordinary stuff and we can hardly recommend the student of Ibsen to consider that Shaw's 'Quintessence' has been in any way supplanted.

**King Arthur's Country.** By F. J. Snell. Dent. 6s. net.

IN undertaking a topographical survey of the Arthurian legend Mr. Snell displays a valour worthy of the Round Table: it is inevitably a thankless and laborious task, and where so much is conjectural the reader's attention is hard to hold. He has done his work well, allowing for the unusual difficulties, and though in places he is inclined to be too patient, and to expect his readers to be too patient, with the pedantry of various authorities who have discussed the subject at interminable

length, without adding much to our comprehension of it, the difficulty of the work and the manner in which it has been performed disarm criticism. It is not a book which is likely to appeal very much to the general reader in search of entertainment, but it is certainly one that will keep its value for a long time.

**Way Back in Papua.** By J. H. Holmes. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d. net.

MR. HOLMES'S long and intimate experience of missionary work in New Guinea has made him familiar with the fast vanishing ideals and habits of the native population. He has embodied his knowledge in the form of a narrative, which he calls "a story of the passing away of the primitive culture and customs of the stone-age Papuans before the encroaching civilization of the white race." The author's zeal is more apparent than his literary ability.

**Ovid and His Influence.** By E. K. Rand. Harrap. 5s. net.

A CHARMING little book on a poet whose works, after being used for centuries as an elementary reading book in Latin, then dropped out of sight, and lately taken up as an authority on folk-lore and primitive religion, have still to recover the affection of readers not wholly given over to the habit of Horace or the adoration of Virgil. Prof. Rand, unlike most of the authors in this series, seems to be aware of the works of English scholars. We recommend the book most heartily.

**English Monastic Finances in the Later Middle Ages.** By R. H. Snape. Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d. net.

THIS latest volume of 'Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought' is an attempt to put together what we know of the business side of the life of a great monastery. Its net result is that it is impossible to draw up a balance sheet showing its income and expenditure. Money and rents in kind from various sources were allocated to different officials of the house, and were usually paid directly to him. The head of the house was nominally, and in the eye of English law really, in complete control of its finances; he was uncontrolled, could borrow money on the security of its property, and enter on fantastic building schemes. Mr. Snape has given a very complete account of his subject based on printed sources; unfortunately we have very few detailed expenditure rolls of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as they were usually cut up or cleared for other uses after a reasonable time. His book is a mine of information on a side of monastic life to which comparatively little attention has been paid.

MOTORING  
SPORTS CARS

BY H. THORNTON RUTTER

IN the catalogues issued by the majority of makers of motor-cars in this country appear what are termed "sports" cars, which are capable of attaining a somewhat higher speed on the road than the ordinary touring models. As a rule, there is little difference in the mechanical design of these models, but greater care is taken in the balancing of the reciprocating and other moving parts of the engine, and in the transmission of power to the road wheels. Usually these sports models are fitted with narrow, open touring bodies to seat two or four persons, but recently increased protection has been given to the passengers by hood, screen and side-curtains. Last week I was able to test the sports 9-20 h.p. Rover on the road—a small car with ample room for the driver and a passenger in the front seat, and a dickey seat at the back for a third person which will also hold luggage. Usually people are shy of buying this type of vehicle because they believe it to be difficult to drive in ordinary traffic. To dissipate that impression I hasten to state that the modern "sports" car is as docile as the ordinary type, and in fact is easier and safer to drive than any

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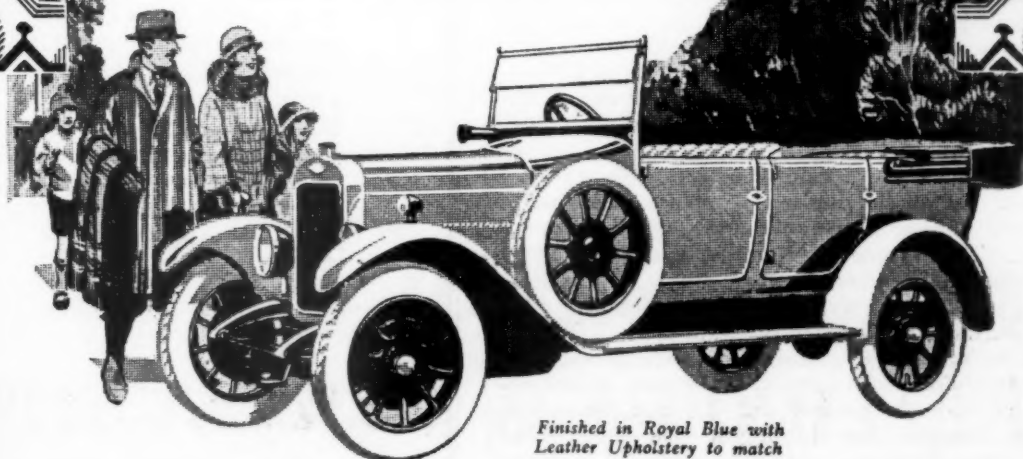
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other model. This Rover can crawl on top gear; it can be accelerated to cover a mile in a minute; while touring at a speed of between forty-five and fifty miles an hour is a pleasant performance on the open road. Such cars are safer to drive than less speedy types because, the engine being more responsive and the steering positive and light to handle, the control of the driver is more complete in moments of urgency of action than with a more sluggish engine. The brakes on cars are excellent now that the four wheels have to bear their share of the decelerating, and this is a necessary corollary to the general increase in the average road speed. The 9-20 h.p. Rover has a three speed forward gear-box and the good driver takes advantage of its ratios and uses them to ease the strain on a willing high-speed engine. The springing is good, while the hood and side curtains, when in position, transform the open car into a warm and comfortable coupé. At its low price it is excellent value to those motorists who require a two-seater vehicle. They get all the advantages of the ordinary touring car with the extra acceleration of the sports engine.

\* \* \*

At the other end of the scale of sports cars (taking the small nine to ten horse-power models as a starting point) is what is known as the three-litre class with engines rated at about sixteen horse-power. A leading example of these larger sports models is the three-litre Bentley, which with a racing body has proved its speedy qualities on many occasions, notably by its performance in France last year when it ran for twenty-four hours at an average speed of ninety-five miles an hour. The Bentley is a most simple car to drive and handle; here, again, one can crawl at ten miles an hour on top gear, although the back axle ratio is very high, while its speed on second gear is sixty miles an hour, and there are two higher gears than that. I tested one of these recently, and attained a speed of seventy-eight miles an hour up a hill with the hood up, so that the wind resistance was great on the four-seater body. Yet the most crowded thoroughfare in London did not present any difficulty, because of the gentle running of the highly balanced engine at low speeds. In the case of the Bentley sports model, one can have a touring body that gives plenty of room for four persons, and carry them at a speed of ninety miles an hour if the road permits of such a pace. In any case owing to the power and smooth running of the engine one can tour the country at a speed of about forty-five miles an hour, yet never appear to be travelling fast so even is its progress on the highways. And that is the characteristic of high-class sports cars; they give speed on the road apparently without any fuss or effort, and yet are comfortable to drive at a snail's pace. Originally, the term "sports" denoted a noisy, uncomfortable, although speedy automobile. To-day, one finds sedate, and middle-aged people driving these modern sports cars quietly and unostentatiously, smoothly gliding past most of the other traffic when occasion permits them to do so without frightening or endangering the safety of other road users. It is because the character of both the owners and the cars themselves have changed that I suggest that some other title than "sports" should be bestowed on these excellent cars.

## ACROSTICS

[We greatly regret that owing to an unaccountable postal delay the results and answers to correspondents of Acrostic No. 215 have not come to hand from our Acrostic Editor as we go to press.—ED. S.R.]

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 217.

*Twelfth of the Fifteenth Quarter.*

TWO THRENODIES BEQUEATHED US BY "MASTERS OF THE SHELL WHO HEARD THE STARRY MUSIC AND RECOUNT THE NUMBERS WELL."

1. Fay-freighted—oft with cocksurenness combined.
2. Here the live coal superfluous you will find.
3. "The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves."
4. That this is doubtful all the world believes.
5. In savage countries culture's pioneer.†
6. Extinct and toothless reptile, useful here.
7. If fishes shaved, their barber he might be.
8. A cameo reversed, dear friends, that's me!
9. None higher in our hierarchy stands.
10. Frequents the river-mouths of distant lands.

\* Emerson, 'Ode to Beauty.'

† Darwin, 'A Naturalist's Voyage round the World.'

### Solution of Acrostic No. 215.

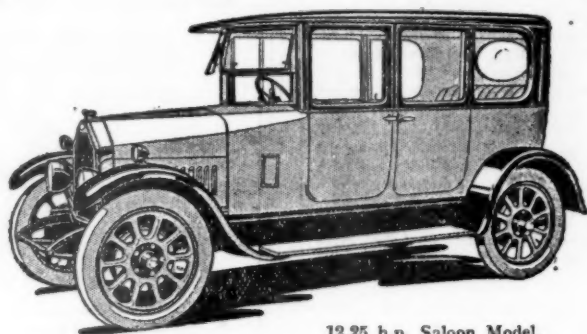
E	xtremis	T	<sup>1</sup> <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> is the common Foxglove. Digitalin, prepared from it, is
D	eat	H	employed in medicine. The Germans
W	ardrob	E	call the Foxglove <i>Fingerhut</i> , 'thimble.'
A	ya	H	
R	ednalec	I	
D	igitali	S <sup>2</sup>	<sup>2</sup> To this order belong the Crickets, Grass-
G	uil	T	hoppers, Locusts, Cockroaches, etc.
I	r	On	
B	lubbe	R	<sup>3</sup> <i>Nycticorax Gardeni</i> , the Common or
O	roccol	I	Garden Night-heron, remains concealed
N	rthopter	A <sup>3</sup>	during the day and does not roam
	ight-hero	N <sup>3</sup>	abroad until the approach of night.



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## THE QUARTERLIES

The *Quarterly* gives the place of honour to a paper by Mr. J. Bailey on 'Queen Victoria,' which, like most of the other reviews of 'The Letters,' deals at the same time with Miss Ramsay's book on Foreign Policy. Apart from this article there is very little of a purely literary character in this number. Dean Hutton gives an account of 'The Register of Archbishop Parker,' and pays a fitting tribute to his scholarship and piety. Mr. Payling Wright discourses on 'Dante and Giotto,' speculating as to whether they had ever met, and if so— Mr. Mozley paints a moving picture of 'Newman in Fetters,' and of a hierarchy which found itself embarrassed by the convert it had to welcome. Mr. D. Gordon writes pleasingly and learnedly on 'The Partridge.' The most important paper in the number is that on 'The Real Naval Incubus'—not the number of ships and men afloat but the official staff at home.

The *Edinburgh* puts French Finance first on the list (it is fifth in the *Quarterly*), but neither Mr. Peel nor Sir Bernard Mallet has any panacea to offer except to balance the budget. Mr. Kingsley Martin writes the article on 'The Victorian Monarchy.' Lord Ernle continues his study of the 'Founders of the Modern Novel' by a sketch of Fielding's life and works, in which, however, he does not mention the very ingenious Apology for the life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews, which was the foundation for Fielding's novel. Mr. Payling Wright here describes 'La Cabale des Dévots'—a more or less secret organization for putting pressure on the authorities to support religion. Mr. Edwin Bevan gives a good analysis of 'Idolatry' in all its forms, and shows how narrow is the line between the permitted use of images and that utterly forbidden. Mr. G. H. Clark writes on the Walloon-Flamand question in Belgium and the attitude of Holland to it, and Mr. Pilcher eulogizes 'Lord Reading's Indian Viceroyalty.'

*Science Progress* treats of 'The Determination of Stellar Parallax'—the nearest stars are so far away that the unit by which their distance is measured is the distance light travels in a year; 'Parasitism in Evolution,' a most disquieting and interesting treatment of the subject; 'The Industrial Measurement of Colour,' proposing some universal standard of reference to measure Brilliance or Tone, Hue, and Saturation. There is also an interesting study of S. T. Coleridge as a Philosophical Biologist. The 'Recent Advances' contain a note on Prehistoric Remains in East Anglia of some importance.

*Foreign Affairs* contains among other important papers one on 'French Naval Aims' by M. de Kerguezec, a French Senator and chairman of the Navy Committee; Mr. Lippmann on the constitutional bearing of Col. House's papers; Prof. Gay on 'War Loans or Subsidies,' showing that up to the present subsidies have invariably been made; M. Nicolas Politis, formerly Greek Foreign Minister, on 'How the World Court has Functioned'; Mr. E. L. Piesse on 'Japan and Australia'; S. Manuel Gamio on 'Mexico's Agrarian Problem'; and Mr. S. P. Gilbert, the Agent-General for Reparations Payments, on 'The Meaning of the Dawes Plan.'

The *Print Collector's Quarterly* opens with an account of 'Swiss Coloured Prints of the Eighteenth Century' by Dr. Rudolf Bernoulli with twelve illustrations, and follows with Mr. H. M. Hake's paper on 'Dighton Caricatures' at the end of the eighteenth century with eight illustrations. Mr. Campbell Dodgson himself writes on the work and personality of M. Adolphe Beaufrère, "one of the most excellent etchers of the day in France." Mr. C. A. Nicholson describes the 'Etchings of Orovida' with ample illustration and a complete list of these charming works of the daughter and granddaughter of artists.

The *Calendar* has for its most characteristic paper one by Mr. Wyndham Lewis on 'Creatures of Habit'; change and progress are his subjects. The verse is by Mr. Edgell Rickword, Mr. Douglas Garman, and Mr. Bertram Higgins. Miss Dorothy Edwards has a sketch, 'The Conquered,' and Mr. T. F. Powys in 'Mr. Handy's Wife' another study of the unpleasant. Mr. Samuel Hoare gives some sound criticism of M. André Gide and of Proust.

The *New Criterion* gives us an ample and varied selection of subjects. M. Henri Massis, in a paper somewhat cavalierly translated, writes of the German and Russian turning towards the East for inspiration, and the consequent danger to Western civilization. Mr. J. M. Robertson on 'Criticism' brings out the difficulties of the art, and gives some examples of failure in the past and to-day. Mr. E. M. Forster praises rather unreservedly 'The Novels of Virginia Woolf'—his extracts do not always justify the labels he puts on them. Mr. Yeats prints a criticism of Irish Roman Catholic authorities which no Irish paper would publish; Mr. Chapman-Huston writes on 'Lord Curzon the Orator and the Man,' and Mr. Massingham in 'The Finding of Merlin' carries the theories of Mr. Perry beyond even the dreams of their author. There are sketches by Mr. Moncrieff (child-life) and Ivan Bunin. One of the special features of this review is its survey of European art and literature and of out-of-the-way Foreign Periodicals. Its reviews of Books of the Quarter are somewhat severe but good and just.

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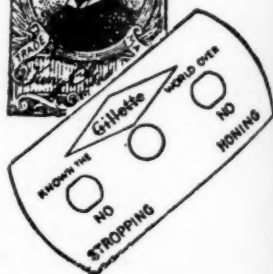
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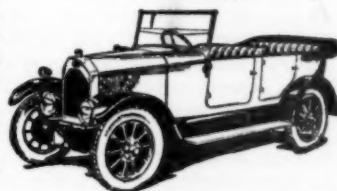
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## CITY NOTES

*Lombard Street, Thursday*

THERE are certain obvious features of Mr. Churchill's second Budget which are popular in the City. The raising of the Sinking Fund for this year to £60,000,000 in order that the coal subsidy may be paid out of revenue is regarded as sound, though industrialists may think that some of the burden of such exceptional expenditure might be carried forward to future years. The termination of the Trades Facilities Act is also welcomed and the price of gilt-edged issues should benefit. The nation's credit is sufficiently pledged already and the need for such an Act is now less evident since present money rates enable industry to borrow much more cheaply than when the Act was introduced. The abolition of the three years' average rule for income-tax assessment is something to look forward to. The three years' rule acted as a check on enterprise, for in recent years a number of firms have had to go out of business after an exceptionally prosperous year.

## NITRATES

The nitrate market has developed great weakness this week, the direct cause being the passing of dividends of several nitrate companies. The outlook also appears unfavourable owing to the fact that the sale of Chilean nitrates has greatly diminished. This is due to several causes, the most important of which is the keen competition of the synthetic product. Chilean nitrate is sold at too high a price. In addition, owing to a superabundant cotton crop, America is not requiring her normal quantity and, for a similar reason, a lesser quantity is needed for the Cuban sugar crop. France and Belgium are buying very little, as owing to their depreciated currencies they are not in a position to pay for it. All these factors have been too much for the Chilean nitrate industry, and explain the present position. There is, however, a remedy. An agitation has been on foot for a considerable time for the Chilean Government to reduce the export duty on nitrates. In view of the fact that the bulk of its revenue is derived from this tax, it is very probable that the present serious position will lead to the desired reform. In passing I would add that it is possible that the seriousness of the present position is being somewhat exaggerated for purposes of propaganda, with the object of hastening the reduction in the tax which is so urgently required. I have in the past limited my recommendations of nitrate shares to those of the Lautaro Company. My reason for this has always been that the Lautaro Company owing to its size is a long way the cheapest producer and is in a position to sell nitrates in Europe at a price which would challenge the synthetic product and at the same time allow the Company to pay substantial dividends. The nitrate association fixes the selling price of nitrates month by month, and each company supplies its quota. If existing conditions do not improve, this Association will have to cease to function. Each Company will sell at whatever price it can, and in my opinion the result would be that the entire Chilean nitrate industry would pass into the hands of the Lautaro Company. The nominal value of Lautaro shares is £5. Dividends of 15% were paid last year, and I see no reason why, even if the worst happens, the dividend should be reduced below 10% for the coming year. In these circumstances, while admitting that the position has taken a very grave turn, I think holders of Lautaro shares should retain their holdings, and, given at the outside a year or two's patience, they should be amply rewarded.

## SAN PAULO WATER

A month or so ago a City of San Paulo Waterworks issue was made, the rate of interest being 7%

and the issue price 96. The loan was brought out under first-class auspices and the lists were closed within a few minutes of the opening. When dealings started the price was in the neighbourhood of 1 premium. It has now fallen back to  $\frac{3}{4}$  premium on realizations by weak holders. At this price I consider the issue attractive and eminently suitable for mixing purposes. In due course I expect it to reach par.

## RUBBER

The rubber market has received a decided stimulus this week by the announcement from the Colonial Office as to their future plans about the restriction of rubber. If the price of rubber for the quarter ending August 1 averages under 1s. 9d. per pound, as from August 1 restriction will be reimposed to the extent of exports being reduced from 100% to 80%. This step should have a very far-reaching effect on rubber companies and therefore on the price of rubber shares. Serious fears should no longer be entertained of rubber falling back to a level which is uneconomical for the producers. Whoever is responsible for this policy certainly deserves the gratitude of rubber shareholders, although it is doubtful whether this gratitude will be shared by Mr. Hoover in America.

## THOMAS TILLINGS

The frequent recommendation of Thomas Tillings ordinary shares is justified by the recent bonus declarations. At a meeting held this week, shareholders passed the necessary resolutions for the distribution of a cash bonus of 6s. 8d. per share and the free issue of two bonus shares for every share held—this in addition to the 15% paid in dividends last year. Shareholders have certainly no cause to complain of their investment. The shares this week have changed hands at 70s., which is about £1 higher than when attention was originally drawn to them in these notes.

TAURUS

## Company Meeting

## FRIENDS' PROVIDENT AND CENTURY LIFE OFFICE

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Friends' Provident and Century Life Office was held on April 26, at the Holborn Restaurant, London. Mr. Alfred Holmes (the chairman), who presided, said: After providing a dividend to the shareholders, £34,911 was carried forward, as against £25,556 brought in. The aggregate funds have increased by nearly £53,000 during the year, and now amount to £2,230,000.

It is the fundamental object of a life assurance society to provide the life policy as a means of protection for dependents. But from the point of view of the safe accumulation of funds at a good rate of interest a life policy is almost equally attractive. Now, in life assurance societies the merits of trust companies are in large measure added to those of life assurance. There is usually a wide spread of investments, and similar advantages from dealing in investments on a large scale, and from a constant skilled supervision of funds. At one time the duty of a life office was assumed to end with the payment of the amount due to the deceased member's executors or, in the case of a maturing endowment assurance, to the member himself. Unfortunately in a number of instances one hears of the provision which has been made being partially or wholly lost by injudicious investment; in other cases through lack of the requisite knowledge a favourable rate of interest is not secured; while in other instances again, owing to the inability to obtain a spread of investment, a depreciation in the fund is suffered. The board therefore decided to offer facilities so that monies payable under any of our policies may remain deposited with the office, either for a fixed term of years or for the duration of a specified life or lives. Such deposits are free from the risk of depreciation, while the rate of interest payable upon them is that earned by the office as declared in the annual report from year to year, subject only to a deduction of 10s. per cent. from the gross rate of interest to provide for the expense of management. For the current year 1926 the rate of interest payable on such deposits will be £5 6s. 8d. This rate of interest compares favourably with that which can be secured from ordinary trustee investments. The profits of the office were much more than sufficient to provide the continuance of the bonus at the rate declared at the last division of profits, and the position and prospects of the office were never more favourable.

The report was unanimously adopted.



## Company Meetings

## THE LONDON ASSURANCE

## INCREASED DIVIDEND

The Annual General Court of The London Assurance was held on April 26, at the offices of the Corporation, 1 King William Street, E.C.

Mr. Colin F. Campbell (the Governor), in the course of his speech, said: The Life Department is of special interest this year as another quinquennial period has been completed. If we consider for a moment the working of the account during 1925, the last year in the quinquennium, we find that satisfactory progress has been made. The fund has been increased by £354,000 and now stands at £4,326,525. The premium income has also increased by £41,800, and now amounts to £514,600. The rate of interest earned was £5 7s. 9d., against £5 5s. 11d. in 1924, and the market value of the investments continues to be in excess of the book value. The mortality figures were again favourable, and the expenses of management and commission showed a slightly lower ratio than in 1924.

With regard to the quinquennial valuation, I am glad to say that this disclosed a highly satisfactory situation, on which we congratulate Mr. Hemming, our Life Manager and Actuary. The realized profit now is such that we are able to give to the policy holders in the old series double the amount they received ten years ago, and to those insured in the new series a compound reversionary bonus at the rate of £2 per cent. per annum, which is considerably in excess of that received by them previously and compares favourably with the results obtained by other leading life companies.

Intermediate Bonus in respect of With Profit Policies included in the present valuation which may become claims during the current quinquennium will be at the same rates, and this gives practically all the advantages of an annual distribution of profits.

## FIRE ACCOUNT

With regard to the Fire Account, the year taken as a whole was a good one, the loss ratio being 44.7 per cent. and the expense ratio 45.7 per cent. We were able to increase the premium income by £174,000, to transfer to profit and loss account £143,153, against £104,567 a year ago, and the fire fund, which now stands at £1,550,000, has been increased by £100,000. Our experience in New York is perhaps the least encouraging feature of our fire business, and it is somewhat of an anomaly that, while industrial conditions in the United States exhibit great prosperity, the experience of the Fire Companies generally is unfavourable.

Turning now to the Marine Department, I told you a year ago that the business generally and hull business in particular were on a non-profit-bearing basis, and I welcomed the fact that the principal marine underwriters were devoting their serious attention to the situation. I am glad to be able to tell you that their efforts have met with some success, though there is still room for much improvement. Our underwriters have taken their full part in securing such results as have been obtained already, and they will continue to co-operate with the other leading companies in endeavouring to re-establish the business on a sounder basis.

We have maintained the fund at a million after transferring £85,104 to the credit of profit and loss account.

The three accounts controlled by the Accident Department continue to make steady progress, and the scope of their activities is being extended as opportunities permit.

Turning to the profit and loss account, you will observe that the interest and dividends received which are not carried to other accounts amounted to £130,606, and that the total amount to be disposed of after making the transfers from the various accounts is £636,513.

After paying the dividends declared last year and making transfers of £25,000 each to contingencies account and premises account, together with provision for Income Tax and other charges, there remains £262,117 to be carried forward to the next account, which is £10,600 more than the balance brought in. Your directors think that this justifies an increase in the dividend to be paid to the ordinary shareholders this year, so that our proposal is to increase it from 10s. 6d. per share to 11s. 3d., or from 42 per cent. to 45 per cent., and a notice to this effect has already appeared in the newspapers.

Lastly, we come to the balance sheet. It is gratifying to observe that the contingencies account now amounts to £500,000. This is an entirely free reserve, and, with the general reserve of £1,300,000, forms a substantial sum against the increasing demands made upon Insurance Companies by their constituents to extend the scope of their cover. The value of the investments continues to be considerably in excess of that shown in the balance sheet, and the total value of the assets now exceeds 11 millions. It is only two years since we were congratulating ourselves on having passed the 10 million standard.

The report was unanimously adopted.

## PHOENIX ASSURANCE CO., LTD.

The 144TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the shareholders of the Phoenix Assurance Company, Limited, was held on April 27 at Phoenix House, King William Street, E.C.4.

Mr. Edward Gurney Buxton, who presided, said: Gentlemen,—The outstanding transaction of the year was the sale by us of our holding of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society's shares to the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.

There are eliminated from our accounts now submitted the transactions of the Norwich Union Fire Office, and from the balance sheet there have been removed their assets totalling some five and a half million pounds, in place of which we have the securities representing the purchase price, and you will observe that the total funds of the company have been substantially increased.

The income in the fire department amounts to £3,143,408, and the loss ratio of 51.4 per cent. is by no means unsatisfactory.

In the marine department we record a net premium income of £533,334; first year losses represent 34 per cent., an improvement of some 2½ per cent. upon the similar disbursement in 1924. Our marine fund at £681,888 represents 128 per cent. of the year's income.

Looked at as a whole, the total incomes from the accident department amount to £3,959,385.

Our life funds have grown to £13,705,893; net new assurances were issued for sums amounting to £2,260,975, which is a substantial and satisfactory figure.

Our interest, dividends and rents produced £554,786, and against that we paid away dividends and interest on debentures totalling £546,913. Profits from the Revenue Accounts total £401,383.

The General Reserve has been added to the extent of half a million, and a reserve for dividends payable in 1926 has been set up.

The dividend and debenture interest paid in 1925, together with the reserves now set up for dividends payable in 1926, are more than covered by the balance brought forward from 1924, plus the interest and profits earned during 1925.

The balance carried forward is just over one and a half millions.

From the balance sheet you will observe that our General Reserve now stands at £2,500,000, and we have created an Additional Reserve of £1,000,000, and a Contingency Reserve of £817,272. These, in conjunction with the full departmental reserves, constitute a position of financial stability of the highest standard.

Our total assets are just under £32,000,000 invested and utilized as disclosed in the balance sheet. The value of our Stock Exchange securities at present market prices creates a useful margin over and above the amount at which they are brought into account.

The report was unanimously adopted.

## ARMY AND NAVY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, LTD.

The ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, Ltd., was held on April 28 at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

The Right Hon. Lord Ebury, D.S.O., M.C. (the chairman), said: They were now passing through a desperately anxious time, and whilst the result could not yet be foreseen, it was to be hoped that the outcome would be a permanent settlement and one which would be for the betterment of the industry of the nation as well as a precept and example which could not fail to have a tempering influence on the future relationships between employer and employee in all fields of commercial activity. The influences to which he referred might be classified as negative, and, whilst he was discussing in general terms the factors which had been at work during the past year, he ought not to omit certain of a positive nature, which had to his mind unquestionably contributed to those results. Briefly they fell under four headings. Firstly, there was the Society's trading policy—rigid adherence to the principles for which the Society was world-famous, namely, honest trading with its accompaniment of quality and value. Secondly, there was the policy of improvements, which he had explained on former occasions, and which had met with the shareholders' unqualified support and approval. Thirdly, there was the honorary membership scheme which, thanks to the co-operation of shareholders and members, continued to make unabated progress, and provided the Society with the additional clientele that was necessary to increase their prosperity. Fourthly, and perhaps most important of all, there was a spirit of loyalty and co-operation on the part of the staff throughout the entire business.

As would be seen from the report and accounts, the further improvement in the trading results for the past year enabled them not only to maintain the increased dividend which was paid last year, but to increase their carry forward by £24,628, and to place £20,000 to the credit of the reserve fund. Shareholders would recall that he indicated last year that within two years they might increase their carry forward to £100,000, and there appeared to be every reasonable prospect of their doing so. Indeed, in view of the contingencies and risks which from time to time threatened to affect the prosperity of trade in this country, this item should bear a closer relation to the amount of the annual dividend if they were to have an effective buffer to enable them to tide over any emergency without having to curtail the income of those who had invested their money with the Society.

The report and accounts were adopted.

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